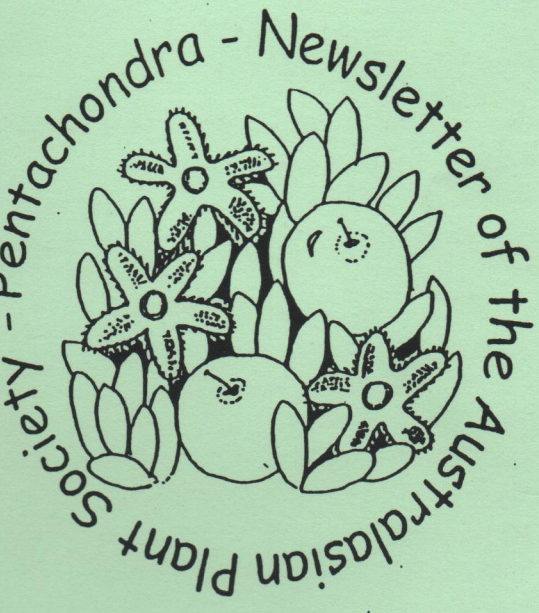


Issue 31 December 2003

AUSTRALASIAN PLANT SOCIETY

Newsletter No. 31
December 2003

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Editorial

Firstly let me thank the Society for their generosity in sending me a gift voucher in recognition of the work done in producing the newsletter, something apparently discussed by those members attending the AGM this summer. I have to admit that I was a little embarrassed to receive it. After all, the post is a voluntary one!

Secondly, due to technical problems (see last page), some members may wonder why their article has not been printed. If you are one of those members, please feel free to submit your news again. Apologies.

Thirdly, Jeff Irons, Tony Entwistle and their very small team of helpers (just two!) are to be praised for all their hard work in staging an exhibit at the RHS Tatton Park Show (see article) and winning a bronze medal.

THANK YOU

Thank you to all those members, especially the core of ever reliable contributors, who have sent in articles and snippets of news. Apologies if I didn't contact you on receipt of your article - lack of time again! Deadline for the May 2004 issue is March 19th. Articles can be sent on disk. Acceptable formats are Microsoft Word, RFT and TXT. If sending a hard copy, a typed version is preferable. Please send to Sue Hyams (address on inside of back cover).

CHANGES IN THE APS LINE UP

President Jeff Irons
Secretary Einion Hughes
Treasurer Tony Entwistle (unchanged)
Seed Manager Richard Christmas
Newsletter Editor Sue Hyams (unchanged)
Webmaster Keith Larkin (unchanged)

CHANGES IN THE SOCIETY'S CONSTITUTION

The following alterations were made at the AGM in June.

Paragraph 1.6
Delete and replace by "members joining after Oct 1st will receive 15 months membership i.e. until the end of the following year."

Paragraph 2.1
Delete the word auditor/examiner from the list of officers.

Paragraph 3.1
Delete and replace with "The executive shall comprise the President, Chairman (if appointed), Secretary, Treasurer and Newsletter Editor, plus not more than four other members appointed by the Secretary and representing different parts of the UK.

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE!

All subscriptions are due on January 1st. Please make cheque payable to Australasian Plant Society and send to Tony Entwistle, 'Ophrys', 113 Station Road, Delamere, Northwich, Cheshire CW8 2HZ

Single member	£6.00
Household	£9.00
Overseas	£9.00

All members are reminded that unless they pay by Standing Order, subscriptions for 2004 are due on January 1st 2004. Members who do not pay by direct debit are reminded that if payment is not received by the end of March, membership will be deemed to have terminated. No further reminders will be issued.

Exchange & Mart

Has only one member got spare seedlings to sell?

Have you all got greenhouses with expanding sides?

Are eucalypt forests springing up all over the country?

Or do you all prefer shrub and herbaceous borders full of the same plant?

In the last issue of the newsletter, it was suggested that the 'Exchange & Mart' column, which previously appeared several years ago, was resurrected. Only one person has sent in his list of 'Plants for Sale'. Sharing excess plants with other members benefits all of us. We learn how best to succeed with them. What one member may be struggling with, another may be having trouble keeping growth under control.

Please send in your contributions for the May 04 issue. If you haven't any seedlings, maybe you have spare seed from uncommon plants, not necessarily Australasians.

To help cover postage costs, it is suggested that members send some stamps when requesting plants/seeds.

Jeff Irons offers the following at £2 each including p&p:

Boronia anemonifolius ssp. variabilis
Boronia anemonifolia ssp. aurifodina
Philothea myoporoides ssp. acutus

BEYOND AUSTRALASIA?

Some members have again raised the question as to whether we should expand the Society to cover South Africa and even South America. This idea was rejected by members some years ago in our questionnaire.

This is an important matter, and one on which the whole membership should decide, not just the few members who attend an AGM.

There are many problems as I see it.

1. Definition and tile. Australasia is easy, but where do we draw the line in Africa and America? I assume the idea is only to cover temperate areas e.g. Cape Province in S.Africa and the Drakensburgs. But what of South America? - surely not all the Andes, and how do we define, say, southern Chile and Argentina?

Should the APS expand to cover South Africa and South America? Send your views to your editor.

And what would we call ourselves? Surely not "Southern Hemisphere", which would mean anywhere south of the equator. South of 15°S latitude would cover nearly all Australia, but give us huge chunks of tropical Africa and America. Antipodean means only Australasia. Maybe just "South Africa", meaning by implication just the RSA, would do, but I cannot see what you would call any S. American participation.

2. The other problem is expertise. As far as Andean alpines are concerned, this is the province of the AGS and best left to them. We may have a modicum of knowledge on South Africa as we have members (as myself) who have visited and been members of the Botanical Society of South Africa.

So my personal verdict would be - neutral on South Africa, but strongly opposed to South America.

It has been said that by expansion we would gain more members - maybe so, but there is a risk of the Society being split into Africans and Australasians!

We are a specialised society, and I think our present 200 membership is about right. So what do you think? Let Sue know, even if it is only an approve/oppose verdict.

We need a "Letters to the Editor" section.

Tony Entwistle

A similar question was raised in 1989, a year after the 'Australian Plant Society' was founded, when it was suggested that we expand to include New Zealand, and change the name to the 'Australasian Plant Society'. I have never been happy with its inclusion. I joined the society initially because it was the flora of Australia in which I was interested, and I feel that by including other countries now, there will be a dilution of the information I am seeking.

Sue Hyams

The AGM - the best bits!

Whilst the Society does need an AGM with its formalities, these only take up a small amount of the time we meet, and the brief note in the last Pentachondra about the forthcoming AGM held on 14th June didn't really do justice to what was planned for the afternoon. (Ed: as the info in the last issue was all that was supplied, it was difficult to print more!)

On the day, 16 members and/or partners assembled, and after some rummaging through plants for sale that some members had brought, we started with a guided tour of the Pershore Gardens by Colin Perkins, who is on the Horticultural staff there.

First port of call was the Alpine Garden Society's garden, where amongst the plants seen I think I noticed a prostanthera bedded out. All the plants are labelled with numbers, and use has to be made of a catalogue to decipher what each is,but the book was in gainful employment by other at the time so I wasn't able to actually check it.

The few Australian and NZ plants which had been planted out in the past had suffered casualties over the years (a familiar story!), but the main item of interest was the National Collection of Proteaceae kept by Martin Smith (another member of staff who manages the glasshouses, and has the plants tucked away down the side of one). In addition to quite a number of proteas and a few other Proteaceae, there were also some prostantheras, kangaroo paws (which were used for cut flowers), and Myrtaceae such as kunzeas, metrosideros, and callistemons.

We admired the high tech methods used to deter wagtails from the glasshouses - redundant CDs dangling by string, before moving into the sales area, where it seemed the alcoholic beverages attracted at least as much attention as the plants!

Finally to the formalities of the AGM, enhanced by tea and coffee, which didn't take too long, leaving time for a further look through the plants and books for sale.

And did I say that there was a great deal of friendly chatter, discussion, comparisons of experiences with plants etc during the afternoon.

So it wasn't the dry AGM you might have thought it would be, but an enjoyable social occasion, with the oppotunity to buy and sell some of those surplus plants raised from the seedlist, extend your library, etc. Hopefully this pleasant blend can be continued and enhnced at future events.

Many thanks to Colin Perkins for giving the guided tour and handling the facilities for us, and Jeff Irons for organising the event.

Keith Larkin



EXHIBITING AT TATTON PARK

The Australasian Plant Society put on an exhibit at the Royal Horticultural Society's Show at Tatton Park, Cheshire in July, and we were delighted to receive a bronze medal. It was not the easiest time to show, as our most colourful Australians, the callistemons and prostantheras had long since finished flowering.

We had a tiered exhibit, 14' x 8', and were fortunate to have on loan as a foliage backdrop some large plants from a Cornish nursery who were also at the Show - *Knightia, Banksia, Metrosideros*, purple Phormiums, several *Pseudopanax* and a variegated *Cordyline.*

The frontage of our tiers were boxes of an annual yellow *Brachyscome* (Tiny Yellow) and *Acaena microphylla.* We had in pots, from local members' gardens, a good selection in flower : - *Baloskion tetraphyllum, Alyogyne hakeifolia* "Elle Marie", *Anigozanthos flavidus* "Illusion", *Billardiera scandens, Boronia citriodora, Calomeria amaranthoides, Leucophyta (Calocephalus) brownii, Carex comans* and *dipsacea, Celmisia longifolia, Cleome viscosa, Cotula alpina, Dampiera diversifolia, Gentiana saxosa, Hibiscus trionum, Melaleuca hypericifolia, Olearia waikarensis, Pelargonium australe, Pelargonium rodneyanum, Prionotes cerinthoides, Rhodanthe chlorocephala splendida, Raoulia australis, Rhododendron viriosum* (was *lochiae*), *Scaevola* "Blue Fan", *Schoenia filifolia, Solanum aviculare, Sollya heterophylla, Wahlenbergia gloriosa.*

And, not in flower, *Acacia dealbata subalpina, Astelia nervosa, Austromyrtus dulcis, Callitris rhomboidea, Eucalyptus dalrympleana, gunnii* and *serraensis, Dracophyllum longifolium, Grevillea robusta, Scleranthus uniflorus, Richea sprengelioides.*



Some 107,000 attended the Show over 5 days, and our exhibit attracted much interest.

So I think it worth all the hard work - there were only four of us living near enough to the show to stage it!

Tony Entwistle

"THERE'S NOWT SO QUEER AS FOLKS"

Manning our stand at Tatton, in the large National Plant Societies marquee, gave me an excellent opportunity to observe people's behaviour - some 20,000 passed by per day for 5 days.

About 50% did not even turn to look at our exhibit, presumably they were wanting the main floral marquee and had come in ours in error; others wandered past with a vaguely happy expression suggesting "I must see everything but I am not stopping to take anything in"; others were too busy eating their exorbitantly-priced icecreams. About 25% did stop and look, albeit briefly, some pointing and talking to friends. It was heartening to know that nearly all of them could recognise a bottle-brush, eucalypt and kangaroo-paw.

As always, a lot of people have an irresistible desire to touch the plants, and our frontage of *Brachyscome* had to endure 5 days of continued massage. More irritating were those who leant forward and pulled out a pot from the exhibit to examine in their hands - did they think it was plastic?

Nor was I pleased at the man who poked the plants vigorously with his umbrella, nor with the small child who in a matter of nano-seconds removed all the pins holding up our cloth front.

Perhaps 1% came and asked questions or sought advice, and all seemed grateful for the advice received, even the few question we could not answer. Perhaps the oddest of all was an elderly lady who announced complainingly (starrring at a 5' high *Anigozanthos flavidus*) "These are all English flowers, there are no Australians. You've got Gladiolus (pointing at my Rhododendron), our daisies (the *Brachyscome*) and honesty (*Eucalyptus gunnii*)". And off she went, leaving me wondering if she needed an optician, a geography lesson, or both.



It was clear that 'Australasian' was not understood by many, and I wondered if we should ask for our title to be displayed as the "Down Under" or the "Koala and Kiwi" plant society.

One lady was heard to say disapprovingly as she passed "Ugh - Asian" - did she think we grew poppies in Afghanistan?

However, I have perhaps sounded rather cynical. It was all very enjoyable to talk to people and don't forget that even if only 5% seemed interested that still means that 5,000 were!

Tony Entwistle

NEWSLETTER NAME - SHOULD WE CHANGE IT?

PENTACHONDRA - What does the word mean?

It has come to my notice that some members may wonder why their newsletter has such a name. 'Pentachondra' was chosen because it is the name of a genus of plants with species in both Australia and New Zealand. The illustration on the front cover is of *Pentachondra pumila*, a low spreading and compact plant with small white flowers followed by berry-like fruits. I have to admit that I've never seen a plant of this name in 'real life', and I never knew of the genus until the name was put forward for the newsletter.

Maybe, for this reason and to help attract new members, we should choose another name. This is where, you, the members, come in. Can you think of a suitable name?

Send your suggestions to 'Letters to the Editor' for publication in the next issue.

DOWN UNDER IN THE FAR SOUTH WEST

Tim Longville

'Cornwall? Oh, it's all rhododendrons and magnolias and camellias.' To which my Punch and Judy reply is, 'Oh, no, it isn't.' There is, for instance, much more in the far South West for those interested in Antipodean plants than you might imagine (as well as for those interested in South American plants or plants from the Far East...)

There is nowadays - and, come to that, there always has been. Well, there has been for at least a hundred years or more. If you don't believe me, read Will Arnold-Forster's *Trees and Shrubs for Milder Counties*, based on his own experiences in his garden, Eagle's Nest, at Zennor. (His book was originally published by Country Life in 1948. It was recently reprinted with updated nomenclature by Alison Hodge. Everyone interested in plants of marginal hardiness should have a copy of one or the other version. A second hand copy of the original first edition will cost you around £30. A new copy of the updated version will cost you about £20. I know which I'd personally go for...)

I think the reason for the notion of Cornwall as a mere ghetto for rhododendrons 'and sich-like stuff' is that for a generation after WWII there was as it were an intermission in more adventurous planting. Partly that was because there was little available energy or cash for new plantings of any kind and, even more importantly, it was because there was little by way of new introductions of plants worth planting. Hence the surviving preconception among those interested in unusual semi-tender exotics, whether Australasian or not, that Cornwall had become a backwater, stuck in its conventional ways and failing to take full advantage of its (unequalled) opportunities.

Since the 1970s, though, that's been less and less true - as was impressed on me during an extended visit there in the Spring of 2003, both by irritated Cornish gardeners and nurserymen and by visits to actual Cornish gardens and nurseries.

Some of those gardens and nurseries will be known to many APS members so I'll deal with them only briefly.

Places such as Trevena Cross, Hardy Exotics, Burncoose & Southdown, or The Duchy Nursery, I hardly need to say anything about at all. (In some cases,

that's just as well, since it wouldn't be easy to stay within the bounds of the libel laws. No names, no packdrill, but the greatest difficulty would be experienced if the nursery name began with, say, B or S...) However, there is also a network of interesting, smaller, quieter, less well-known nurseries scattered across the county.

Try West Coast Nurseries of St Buryan, for instance, who have an interesting range of olearias and pittosporums and who sold me a good sturdy specimen of *Grevillea rosmarinifolia* 'Jenkinsii' for around 4 quid. (Would anyone - who could I possibly be thinking of...? - care to provide a note on 'Jenkinsii', its history and nature, for a future issue of *Pentachondra*?)

Or Jim Cave of Fir Tree Farm, Constantine, whose enormous catalogue (almost 150 pages of it) contains all sorts of semi-tender treasures unpretentiously mixed in with well-known hardy favourites, and all very modestly priced. (Restios for around £4, for instance, rather than the £12 or £15 certain well-known and loudly trumpetted nurseries have been known to charge.) Jim is big enough to do mail order and has a very sensible policy about it: he ships by carrier in open boxes for next day delivery and charges a flat £12 whether the order is £10, £100 or £1000. Combine with friends and buy a lorry-load, perhaps...?

Two much recommended nurseries I didn't manage to visit. (Reports would be welcome if anyone knows either by personal experience.)

First, Mark Brent of Lamorran House, St Mawes, spoke highly of a chap at Gweek, name unrecorded but you won't miss him, Gweek being no more than a dozen houses, who basically grows bedding plants but for fun always grows some different exotics each year, often Australasian ones, and sells them very cheaply, hence is always worth a visit. Mark himself buys from him, which gives you an indication of both the rarity and the quality which can be available there...

Second, Ken Olson of St Martin's Manor, near Looe (more on him later) is one of several people who told me that the man, also nameless, who acts as part-time gardener to Dr Neil Armstrong (more on him later, too) also doubles as a nurseryman. He runs a little, unadvertised, easily missed nursery between Trevena Cross and Penzance - but it is, says Ken, one which stocks some seriously unusual plants, not all of them Australasian but all of them interesting. (That's where Ken's specimen of the Argentinian tree, *Chorisia speciosa*, came from, for instance. Hardy with him so far, it is growing at the positively tropical rate of a metre or more a year. If you want to see what it looks like in its spectacular maturity, consult Susannah Walton's book on her garden, La Mortella.)

Pine Lodge, at Holmbush near St Austell (open every day during the season), will be known to at least some APS members, either as the remarkable two-person creation of a 10 acre garden from scratch in 20 years or as an exceptional nursery or as both. The nursery isn't cheap (there's hardly anything under £7.50 and its examples of *Grevillea rosmarinfolia* 'Jenkinsii' cost exactly twice what West Coast Gardens charged me) but the range is considerable and the quality exceptional. That's true of the plants in the garden, too. This isn't only a garden of exotics. Far from it, as the area devoted to a planting of more than 2000 native trees goes to show. But the exotics are perhaps its most striking feature and many of them are Australasians. Not all of those, either, are Shirley Clemo's beloved *Grevilleas*. On this visit, for instance, I noticed both *Pomaderris apetala* and *P. elliptica* in full and flourishing flower near the house (the former with white flowers, the latter with yellow). In the same area, a wide range of correas, together with *Boronia heterophylla*, have all made substantial shrubs which need regular pruning to keep them within bounds, while if you're willing to turn your eyes for a moment away from Australasia you'll find close at hand flourishing examples of all sorts of rarities, from *Camellia tsai* with delightful tiny delicate white flowers, through *Phylica arborea* 'Superba' (in fact a member of the Rhamnaceae, its silvery new growth makes it look rather like an Ozothamnus - with the bonus of minute but heavily scented flowers), and on to *Orphium frutescens* from South Africa, with flat, pink, satin-y flowers, which Peter Clough says he's never seen grown successfully in any other mainland British garden.

Lamorran House at St Mawes (also regularly open) is even better known and quite unmissable, despite the summertime horrors of the traffic-jammed lanes which lead to it. I'm not making any pretence to describe fully its precipitous four-acres bulging with impossibly tender exotics (the latest addition, which Mark proudly pointed out to me, was yet another addition to its collection of impossibly tender palms: *Trithrinax campestris* from Argentina, had, needless to say, come through its first Cornish winter in absurdly rude health) or even to describe its whole population of Australasians. Instead, I offer a scattering of notebook jottings about those which particularly caught my eye this time, some rare and for most of us impossibly tender, others tantalisingly try-able.

In his account of Prostantheras in the last issue, for instance, Jeff didn't mention the red-flowered *P. aspathaloides*. It thrives in the ground at effectively frost-free Lamorran but even as a pot-plant over-wintered under glass would seem well worth growing. Are climbing metrosideros, such as *M. carmineus*, impossible in climates with regular if mild frosts? One at Lamorran, completely swathing an archway, was a spectacular sight and I could (pleadingly...) offer it a very similar position. Opinions of my chances of success, anyone? Pseudopanax have been

mentioned several times in *Pentachondra* recently but I don't think I've ever seen a more flourishing specimen in the ground than the *P. laetus* at Lamorran, with huge leaves and equally substantial purple flower clusters. Coprosmas are hardly spectacular but they are interesting. *C. robusta* is rare enough. *C. aceroshawera* (I doubted the name so got Mark to spell it out for me) is to me at least something unheard of. I drew a blank on internet search engines. Can anyone enlighten me about it? Whatever precise area it comes from and whatever precise conditions it's supposed to require, it seemed to relish being poised above the sea at St Mawes. A front runner in the 'improbable success' stakes must be *Agathis robusta*, from Northern Queensland, but almost the most charming of all to me, in a quiet and refined way, was the heath myrtle, *Thryptomene* 'F.C. Payne'. Again, if anyone can offer more information, 'historic' or cultural, about this plant, I'd be grateful.

Open by appointment is St Martin's Manor near Looe, owned by retired Swedish surgeon and ebullient extrovert, Dr Ken Olson. The house, a picture-book Georgian rectory, has a steeply sloping 3-acre garden, close enough to the sea to get little frost (what little it gets drains away quickly) yet far enough away to escape salt-laden gales. As a result, ginger lilies, cannas and even calocasias stay in the ground all year. This is a garden of exotic foliage rather than a garden of Australasians yet it contains, for example, many good pittosporums, a *Pseudopanax lessonii* at least 4m high and wide, an equally fine *Tetrapanax papyriferus*, and a metre-tall *Xanthorrhoea* which so far treats Cornish winters with disdain. Turn away from Australasia and, as well as that previously mentioned Argentinian *Chorisia*, you'll find among the garden's other year-round inhabitants such unlikely delights as the wonderfully elegant palm-grass, *Setaria palmifolia*, and a ten-foot begonia from Brazil, *B. luxurians*. St Martin's is a garden which is at its best late in the season, from mid-July onwards, but is well worth seeing at any time.

Finally, my two actual major discoveries and one potential major discovery.

The potential one first. It's potential because I didn't actually get to visit it! Partly because as I arrived in Cornwall its owner, Dr Neil Armstrong, was about to leave for three weeks on Sardinia, partly because I ran out of time and couldn't take advantage of his offer to let Dr Rob Senior act as guide in his stead. This is, as I understand it, Neil's second garden, separate from the sizeable mature one around the house in which he, his wife and four children live. Since he's also taken over from Rob as the senior partner in the medical practice in Marazion, I don't quite know how he manages to keep all of these balls in the air at once, particularly since the new, second garden is a mere 14 acres, in a sheltered valley, near to St Buryan. It is not, I gather, essentially an Australasian garden - Neil's main interest is probably in the infinite riches of the Himalayas and adjoining areas - but I also

gather that the 14 acres do nevertheless contain many rare and tender Australasian plants. People like Mark Brent speak with awed respect of what has already been achieved and of Neil's plans for the garden's future development so I think it's safe to say that no one will be disappointed who can arrange to visit. 'Arrange to visit' because it isn't open to the public. You need to get someone like Mark to 'speak on your behalf' and make the arrangements. I don't think you'd find the arrangements difficult to make. I hardly need to say that my own experience bears out what you'd expect: that Neil is passionate about plants and readily welcomes anyone else who evidences anything like the same degree of interest (even if not, in my case at least, the same levels of knowledge, energy, ambition - or mookahl).

Then the most Australasian of all the gardens I visited and the one on the largest scale - yet one which, though it's regularly open to the public (if in a very unpushy not to say subfusc way), is very little known. It's Tregrehan, between Par and St Austell. (On one side, the boundaries of the Tregrehan estate are in fact shared with those of Pine Lodge.)

This has been a Carlyon family property for centuries. The family has also had property in New Zealand for well over a hundred years and several owners at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth returned from New Zealand when they inherited and planted Australasian trees and shrubs in memory of their days in the Antipodes, many of which survive and are of impressive size (Nothofagus well over 100ft tall, for example). Similarly massive are the rhododendrons, camellias and conifers from the same period. (The conifers include a magnificent *Pinus radiata* which has done its spectacular radiating thing and turned into a gigantic thicket of surreal subsidiary trunks). The owner during much of the post-war period, Gillian Carlyon, was a famous camellia hybridist who concentrated most of her efforts in the walled garden and its 260 feet of glasshouses, and in the areas immediately adjacent to it. The incumbent since the late 80s, however, Tom Hudson, a Kiwi from the family's female line, has wider interests - and bigger ambitions. Among the surprisingly small Cornish world of serious enthusiasts for tender woody plants he has long been, in Mark Brent's admiring phrase, 'a legend.' Elsewhere, he and his garden are almost unknown. Not, I have to say, that that troubles Tom in the least...

Why is he 'a legend'? I'll try to explain.

Ten years ago he cleared out completely the overgrown valley bottom of the 15 acres or so of woodland garden and thinned much of the rest. That has been followed by a grandiose planting scheme of a kind rarely seen nowadays. It is

entirely of trees and shrubs. Virtually all of them have been grown from seed, the vast majority from seed collected in the wild, either by Tom himself or by one of his friends. And all of the planting is, in Tom's oft-repeated phrase, 'at final spacing.' There is absolutely no attempt to make an instant effect, an instant garden. This is planting which will only begin to mature in another 10 years, and much of which will only reach final maturity around the middle of the century. To quote Tom again (what he says contains an unspoken gibe in the direction of the nearby and much-loathed Eden Project), 'I'm aiming to make a garden, not a tourist attraction.' Nuff said?!

On the side of the stream in the valley-bottom nearer to the house and the walled garden the planting is mostly from China, Taiwan, Vietnam, with occasional intrusions from South America. (Particularly from Ecuador. Fowey-born botanist Dr Morley Read runs a forest regeneration project there and, in his spare time, collects seeds for his friends back home.) Attractive plant after plant here I have never heard of. *Euodia gingshanensis*, anyone? Sometimes I've never even heard of the genus. *Huodendron*? And, as in that case, many just have collectors' numbers. In the case of the huodendron, one of Tom's own: TH2564. Or again (Mark Brent made certain I spotted this one, a plant he covets), *Exbucklandia populnea*, another of Tom's own collections, with striking red stems and new growth and huge glaucous leaves, fascinatingly varied in shape. (The new leaves *seemed* to be spoon-shaped, the 'middle-aged' ones bat-wing-shaped, and the mature ones broadly spear-shaped, at least 6ins long and as wide at their widest point.) Right by the stream (in a sort of geographical no-man's-land so far as the garden's plan is concerned, so I'm not really certain where its origins are!) was yet another what-on-earth as far as I was concerned: *Beilschmidia miersii*. Yes, quite. And don't dare to say,'Oh, that old thing...'

As for actual Australasians... On the far side of the stream is a whole area, perhaps 3 acres or so in extent, which Tom calls Godwanaland and which is entirely devoted to Australasian trees and shrubs. As well as the things you'd expect, all in wonderful health (*Dicksonia antarctica* behaving as it does in Southern Ireland and self-seeding down the stream, for example), many of the plants I had never seen before in any British garden. They are of course all young but almost all were clearly thriving and quite undamaged by several Cornish winters. Let me tease you by providing essentially just a list of names, with the occasional brief description where I can't resist it: then you can do your own research on the plants' appearance and their possible hardiness and garden-worthiness. *Acacia calamifolia*, *Lagarostrobus colensoi*, *Carmichaelia arborea*, *C. williamsii* (whose 'scalloped' leaves were very eye-catching), *Melicytus lanceolatus*, *M. obovatus*, *Pittosporum fasciculatum* (a handsome, vigorous, upright shrub, with light green, slightly glossy

leaves, by which I was more than somewhat taken), *P. colensoi*, *Olearia polita*, *O. odorata*, *Plagianthus regius*, *Agathis australis* (wonderfully 'architectural' in shape), *Myoporum laetum* (8ft tall and flourishing), *Microstrobos lanigerum*, *Podocarpus spicatus* and, finally, *P. reichii*, of whose symmetrical, upright growth and long, thin, dark green, shiny leaves my breathless notebook just says, 'Cool' No, not finally. I can't resist one additional plant, simply because I don't know whether to believe my handwriting. What I've written is *Nestigis cunninghamii*. Is that really its name? Can someone tell us about it? As I saw it, it was a delicately handsome 6-footer, with thin willow-like leaves, rather similar to those of *Podocarpus salignus*. Is it a relative of the podocarps?

That, you understand, is the woodland garden. There is also 260 feet of publically available glasshouse. (I leave out of account the 'Private' areas full of even rarer seed-grown treasures being grown on for planting out in years to come.) Mostly, the glasshouse's inhabitants are from the Far East (Scheffleras, Mangletias, tender hedychiums, rhododendrons, camellias) or South America (agapetes in spectacular flower and equally spectacular variety) but in a shaded 'back room' there is the climbing metrosideros, *M. diffusa*, and a collection of tender New Zealand ferns, including some climbing ones.

And as a final piece of good news, not only are the Tregrehan gardens open to the public from mid-March to mid-May but you can stay in self-catering cottages there, converted from staff accommodation and stables, all of which give their occupants direct (and free and unlimited) access to the gardens. The cottages are simply but sufficiently equipped and sensibly priced. We stayed in one, once the estate gamekeeper's cottage, and enjoyed it enormously, since it was ideal not only for the plant-enthusiast (not many holiday cottages have *Hibbertia aspera* wreathed around the door, a four-foot *Prostanthera melissifolia* in the bed alongside, together with what I think was a *Jovellana* species but not one I recognised) but also for the plant-enthusiast's dog (some of Miss Carlyon's camellias may never be the same again...).

My last garden is, Neil Armstrong, Mark Brent, Tom Hudson, Uncle Tom Cobley and all unite in saying, 'the best garden in Cornwall.' Yet Edward Needham's garden at 'Happy Valley', Tregye, near Carnon Downs, is almost completely unknown. Hardly surprising, since it is not open to the public, and you can't telephone its owner and creator (he has no telephone) or even write to him (he has no letterbox; there is in theory an elaborate system by which you can communicate with him via the letterbox of a nominated friend but don't even think about it...). As you'll gather, this is the garden of someone who fiercely guards both his own privacy and that of his garden. Not in any aggressive or misanthropic sense, I hasten to add. It

is simply that he does not wish to have his time wasted by mere gawpers or sightseers. The only way you can visit is by (let's not mince matters) blagging your way in, having previously convinced someone he knows and trusts, such as Tom Hudson (with whom he often goes on plant-hunting expeditions), Mark Brent or Neil Armstrong, that you are seriously interested and at least reasonably knowledgeable, so that that person provides you (a) with a map (it's almost unfindable without one), (b) something by way of introduction-cum-safe-conduct!

'Happy Valley' is strictly speaking nameless (there is no house to give it one) but that's its name 'by legend'. (That's how you'll find it named, for instance, in Douglas Ellory Pett's book on Cornish gardens.) Its four or five acres were originally laid out over a hundred years ago by one of the famous Williams family of gardeners, who took advantage of a sheltered, almost frost-free, stream-filled valley to create a chain of ornamental pools and to plant many tender exotic trees. Edward Needham managed to acquire it 30 years ago, when it was wildly overgrown and weed-infested but with many of the original and now mature and enormous plantings still surviving (gigantic gum-trees and podocarps among them). Since clearing it of rubbish, he has added hundreds of wild-collected plants of his own, mostly trees and shrubs but also much underplanting – and what must be the most outstanding collection of tender ferns (ordinary ferns, tree ferns, climbing ferns, even filmy ferns) in mainland Britain. This is not, though, just a collector's 'assemblage'. It is a real, and extremely beautiful woodland garden, in which carefully spaced open glades, equally carefully spaced planting, together with discriminatingly chosen plant-combinations, unite to make the most of the site's natural advantages. 'It is now,' says Tom Hudson admiringly, 'what I hope my own garden will be in 10 or 20 years' time.'

The rate of growth in Edward's valley is such that his early plantings are now 30, 40, 60 feet tall. *Schefflera impressa* and *S. delavayi* are easily 40 feet tall and at that size their magnificent foliage has an overwhelming impact. Illiciums are the same sort of height and were in full spectacular flower when I visited. Khasias likewise. Several acacia species are 60ft or more tall and self-seed profusely. Self-seeding is indeed a major feature here. Among tree-ferns, for instance, it isn't just *Dicksonia antarctica* which self-seeds. So do several other dicksonia and cyathea species. Indeed, as I went round with Edward he brought tears to my eyes by casually ripping out unwanted tree-fern seedlings by the handful and throwing them aside. (I should add hastily that he is in fact phenomenally generous with seedlings and cutting material. It wasn't that I didn't dare ask for any of his discards. It was that I already had so much I felt embarrassed to have any more. A word to the wise: he was not only disbelieving but even gently disapproving of the fact that I'd come without my own stock of plastic bags, cuttings for the reception

of.)

This is far from being an Australasian garden. It is far more a Himalayan gorge in darkest Cornwall, though with an infinitely wider range of plants than can be seen in most such gardens. But it does have Australasian plants and many of them are spectacular specimens of seriously unusual plants. When I was there, for instance, a 12ft example of *Telopea mongaensis* was smothered in flowers. Is there anywhere in the country you could find another such specimen? And any fern-lover could easily spend a whole day studying the New Zealand ferns in and around the 'grotto' at the top of the valley's chain of ponds, its entrance guarded by the flawless eight and nine foot fronds of *Woodwardias* cascading down from the rock-face above.

This is far from the end of what Cornwall has to offer by way of Godwana-ism. My notebooks contain many more recommendations of gardens and nurseries to visit. Indeed, I've already marked down another visit of two weeks, at least, in the Spring of 2004. The Tregrehan cottage made an ideal centre for gardens in 'mid' Cornwall but was a little too far from Penzance, Helston, St Ives... Next time, I shall try to find one out towards Land's End. Recommendations, anyone?

Note-cum-Newsflash

Alison Hodge has announced her intention to publish a sort of Son-of-Arnold-Forster. That is, a book devoted to the new plants introduced into Cornish gardens (or the old plants re-introduced into them) since his day. It will be called *Gardening on the Edge*, is being edited by Neil Armstrong, and Tom Hudson, Mark Brent and Edward Needham are all contributing chapters. Publication has been 'imminent' and then 'delayed due to unforeseen circumstances' (that is, contributors not contributing!) on more than one occasion already. The latest notion, however, is that it should appear in 2004. Given the quality of its contributors, it should be indispensable for any serious enthusiast, and will clearly contain details of many Australasian plants and their cultivation in Cornish (if not in more generally British) gardens. Alison's website (www.alison-hodge.co.uk) will keep you up to date on its, ahum, progress.

Reporting from Cumbria....

In late June, Hugh Barr sent in a report on his garden at Beauhill, Beacon Edge, Penrith, Cumbria, where he has been gardening since 1953. Members were first introduced to Hugh's garden in the December 2001 issue of Pentachondra, where Tim Longville wrote an article entitled 'The Southern Hemisphere in the Far North'.

In his article, Tim described Beauhill as - 'seven hundred feet up, miles from the sea, only forty miles from the Scottish border, and completely exposed to winds from the south, east and west, hardly the dream specification for a gardener with a keen interest in Australasians. Yet Beauhill also has two great natural advantages: it faces almost due south, so gets most of what little heat the Cumbrian climate can provide, and its steep slope means that both water and cold tend to drain away quickly down the hill.'

Over the years Hugh has provided shelter against the cold winds, as well as creating pockets of micro-climates, by planting a great number of trees.

Beauhill Report, June 2003

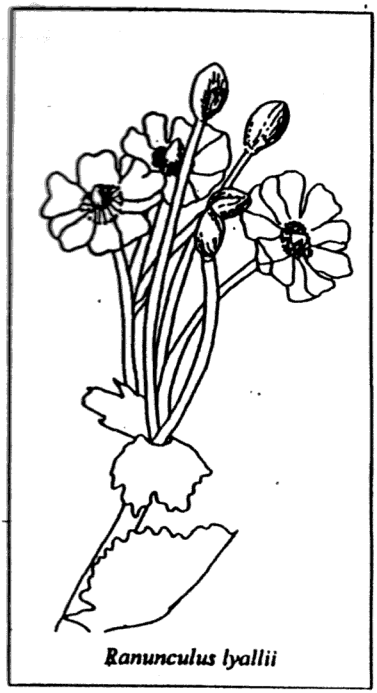
By Hugh Barr

I promised, after I retired, that I would keep my head down but here I am, in response to Tim Longville's article in Pentachondra, breaking that promise. After reading the article I had to go out and go round the garden to be sure he was talking about my garden, it sounded so good and I always think of it being a bit untidy. However, like any gardener, get a lot of interest, a sense of excitement and some satisfaction out of the many plants grown in one's own garden.

The description by Tim is accurate in describing the situation, we are fortunate living in such a lovely area of the country. I am convinced that our climate is changing. We are certainly getting less snow year by year. The result is that one seems to be growing plants which are considered tender and waiting for the return of a cold year in order to see which of them are really hardy. I am also grateful for the correct naming of the plants by Jeff Irons.

Celmisias were perhaps the first Southern Hemisphere plants I became interested in and those in particular from NZ. I find the naming of these plants, apart from a few, difficult so that most of the plants produced from

seed in my garden will be hybrids. The fact that celmisias are not self fertile (Jeff's report in a previous bulletin) is a fact which I did not know.



Ranunculus lyallii

I am pleased that *Pachystegia* is back again after its brief sojourn in the genus *Olearia*, but will it remain? I grow *P. insignis*, *P. insignis* var *minor* and *P. rufa*. The first mentioned is perhaps the finest of the three. I had difficulty growing this at first but growing it on a slope seems to ensure that the frost runs off it and probably more importantly the rain also. It is quite hardy here but does not like the damp. It is a lovely plant with its emergent leaves absolutely woolly white to start with. Grown o the flat it will need some protection from the wet. I have previously flowered it in a pot and there is no doubt it is a handsome plant. I have two plants growing, one I nearly lost with the damp and is now recovering after moving it on to a slope. The other is on a bank and is looking good. *P. insignis minor* is not so difficult and seems to tolerate the damp.

Another plant I will mention is the Mount Cook Lily, *Ranunculus lyallii*, mainly because this year I have never had it so good. They really look as they do in the wild in New Zealand. They flowered last year but were small plants and did produce seed. The seed however was small and I felt probably not viable, so far no germination. This year I feel they should flower well and hopefully provide healthy seed. They are growing in fairly rich soil in partial shade. I felt that they should associate well with meconopsis so some *Meconopsis* 'Lingholm' have been planted with them. So let's hope, if they flower at the same time, for a superb show. This year with their dinner plate leaves I am expecting great things. If I get viable seed then hopefully we shall be able to continue to produce these beautiful buttercups. They certainly made a lasting impression on me when I saw them in NZ. in 1991.

Myosotidium hortensia, the Chatham Island Forget-Me-Not, is not really hardy here but by using some overhanging canopy or covering in the winter with bracken one can usually bring them through. They produce seed (flat black

rather irregular seed) in plenty. This is one plant where seed germinates readily so that one can have plants coming along should one lose them. It also is a large attractive plant so its worth the extra bit of trouble. Tim probably grows this in his milder west coast situation and no doubt does not get any frost.

I should like to come back to celmisias in the future and also discuss other NZ plants such as anistomes. I have two large seedlings of *Anistome latifolia* growing and I am just wondering where they are going. They look at if they are going to form quite large plants but taking their time in getting there. So this is for the future and I shall have to be patient.

No doubt there are many of you out there with greater knowledge of these plants and anything you could offer would be gratefully received.

Update 22 August 2003

By Hugh Barr

This year I had great hopes for the plants as they seemed in good shape. What a year! We had yesterday the first rain for ages. The garden, being a dry garden in the first instance, has never been so dry as this year. The sun was also very powerful. The effect on the plants was interesting. *Hoheria lyallii* set a goodly number of flowers but as the days passed it aborted every flower bud formed. The other plant, *H. sexstylosa*, did the same. The plants seem otherwise all right. The myosotidiums did not even flower nor did the *Ranunculus lyallii*. The plants look healthy enough. The celmisias have been all right but they grow in shadow. I appreciate the shade in the garden, at least this affords one a little time waiting for the rains. No doubt the dry spell earlier in the year with the night frosts did not help.

So will have to wait until next year.

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Dear Pentachondra,

I have left *Anigozanthos flavidus* in pots on my verandah and they have come through the winter for 6 years now. In early autumn 2002 I put 3 plants into the garden itself, at the top by a low south-east facing wall. They all survived the winter (I live just 500 yds from the sea) and have grown strongly, though none flowered this year.

Judy Clark
Hastings

Griselinia littoralis

Brian Halliwell

Griselinia littoralis has a common name of Broadleaf in New Zealand, its country of origin. Usually placed in the *Griseliniaceae*, this is the only genus I know in which growth buds are not in the axils, but occur between leaves.

In the wild, it can make a tree of 40ft or more. Leaves are alternate, broadly oval, thick, yellowish green, have a prominent midrib and with a dull gloss. Flowers, usually in panicles, occasionally racemose are greenish and usually un-noticed. As flowers are dioecious with male and female being on different plants, fruit is rarely seen in gardens although they are recorded as occurring on trees at Inverewe.

Whilst a tree in the wild and can become one in gardens in this country, it is more usually treated as a shrub. It can be kept to any size by regular pruning in March. Overgrown bushes can be very hard pruned at this time and as long as soil is not dry, rapid new growth occurs.

It seems tolerant of any soil that is not subject to waterloggging. Fully hardy throughout the British Isles, it is well able to withstand maritime exposure. As it tolerates hard pruning, it is well suited to be a hedging plant. When I was a parks apprentice in Halifax some 50 years ago, it was second only to privet for winter hardiness. At that time winters were very cold and prolonged. The ground froze solid to several inches depth and could remain so for weeks if not months. Although common laurel was often killed, broadleaf survived.

Whilst the straight species is an attractive evergreen shrub in its own right, *G. littoralis* 'Variegata' is better. This has leaves with irregular yellow margins which seems as tough as the species and just as vigorous. There is a number of cvs. eg. 'Bantry Bay', 'Brodick Gold', and 'Dixon's Cream', in which the yellow variation is central on the leaves. Whilst these are more spectacular than *G. littoralis* 'Variegata' they are unstable and revert, there is less vigour and in full sun when the soil is dry, they tend to scorch.

Propagation is easy by cuttings taken at any time between August and January. Although quicker and easier when cuttings are kept in frames or glassshouses, if inserted outside in the open soil they are not difficult to root if winters are not unseasonably cold.

Reporting from Leeds....

Put bluntly, my motives for writing this article are frustration, desperation, and a desire to boast. I sometimes ask myself what it is that tempts me to assail passers-by, to waylay the girl with the bare midriff and the pierced navel, or attract the attention of the fierce looking gentleman of advanced years who looks perfectly capable of using his walking stick as a cudgel. The answer of course is an Australian plant, actually a shrub. It is not my winter flowering heart-leaved gum (*Eucalyptus cordata*) which is rather compact and reasonably well-behaved; not all of them are. Neither is it any of my bottlebrush bushes which do everything required of them except flower, though I think that *Callistemon linearis* and *citrinus* may be rather unusual living in the open this far north and sixty miles from the coast.

No, this is something which I believe to be unique in the parish of Adel, very rare in the wapentake of Skyrack, and quite uncommon in the whole county of Yorkshire. I am referring to a Banksia, a Banksia which is thriving in ordinary clay loam and a Banksia which is about to flower. What gives me the greatest sense of pride and satisfaction is my treatment of this bush; this treatment can accurately be described as absolute neglect. I think I buried some hoof and horn fertiliser in the ground when I first planted it out about nine years ago as a two or three year old seedling. Since then it has never been fed. It has never been covered with fleece, glass or perspex or anything for that matter, except for the occasional snow flurry. The watering can has been a stranger to it and I doubt very much whether it knows the meaning of the word mulch.

This particular example is a *Banksia oblongifolia*, sometimes known as *B. asplenifolia*. My specimen is not spectacular, in fact rather spindly and straggly. It is now early October and the flower buds have been developing and slowly expanding throughout the summer months. At the present time the most advanced of the buds bear a marked resemblance to an elongated pincushion. To be honest, as far as the colour goes, certain words beginning with 'D' spring to mind...drab, dreary, dull and even disappointing. It is a combination of greenish-brown and brownish-green. I hope the actual flowers, if and when they do appear, are an improvement. There are eight flower spikes and the longest measures 11cm. There were nine buds; a squirrel took one but then left the rest alone, though he and his relatives were rather more thorough in their dealings with my plums and pears.

Apparently *B. oblongifolia* was one of the earlier Banksias to be discovered and named; the name being given in 1800 by Antonio Cavanilles after the type gathered by Luis Née at Port Jackson (Sydney) NSW in 1793, on account of the shape of the leaves. Its native habitat is mainly coastal in Queensland and New South Wales, where it is in flower between March and July. It is said that small mammals such as the Eastern Pygmy Possum and the Sugar Glider are better pollinators than birds, though I have a very strong suspicion that this is of no more than academic interest in the present case.

Thomas Naylor

Report on Four Oaks Show, Sept 03

There did not seem to be as many new varieties on display this year.

I noticed new varieties of brightly variegated cultivars of Coprosmas, such as Evening Glow, Fireburst and Surprise, a variegated *Wiennmania racemosa* "Galaxy", and a lot of new Phormiums.

Agresco (Carmel) had many Grevilleas from Tal nurseries, Israel, such as Robyn Gordon, Johnsonii, Spiderman, Joe Mason, Rondo, Clear View David, Sandra Gordon, Ivanhoe, Willie, Cal Gem, Pink Surprise, Sylvia, Misty Red, *thelemanniana* silver. (Contact Peter Bernard, Agresco Agricultural Export Co. Carmel House, 41 Swallowfield Way, Hayes, W. Sussex UB3 1DQ.)

I also spoke to Neil Pike of Ausfern, who again expressed willingness to obtain plants for members from the Melbourne plant market (this would be mainly eastern Australian plants), and incorporate them in their air shipments. It would not be economical to import individual plants, but mixed boxes of different plants (young rooted) could be made up if sufficient members let me know what they would like. They could be sent on by post after fumigation and Defra clearance from their Essex nurseries. They hope to import Banksias soon.

One product I shall be trying (with a free sample!) is "roots 1-step transplant" a mixture of 17 mycorrhizae and root stimulant, for potting on seedlings and young plants (Amenity Land Services, Long Lane, Wellington, Telford, TF6 6HA).

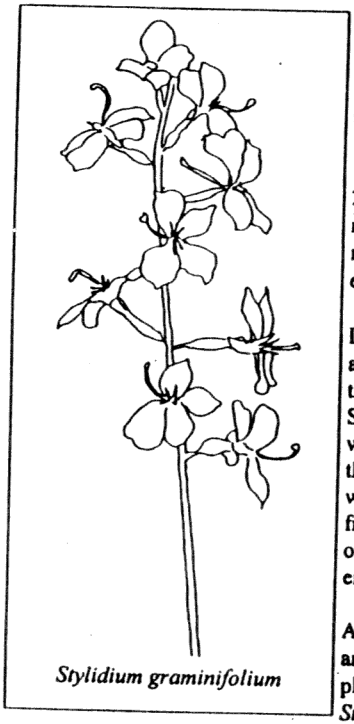
I also enquired at Sinclair, who make an immense variety of composts. They have no low phosphate compost, but their Hardy Ornamentals Propagation compost (pH5), has a low P (70) compared with most.

Tony Entwistle

Reporting from North Yorkshire....

The back garden faces south east and is very open to cold east winds, whereas the front garden faces south west and is relatively sheltered from these cold winds. The soil is very free-draining and easily workable whatever the weather or time of year. Living in the Vale of York, there can be many days of freezing fog or low cloud cover during the winter, keeping day time temperatures very low, while only five miles away, the sun can be shining!

We are all aware that this summer has been exceptional. August, in particular, can be singled out as the month that saw temperatures soar. In Scotland, August was dry and sunny, with a heatwave experienced from the 5th - 9th, when the temperature reached or exceeded 29°C somewhere everyday. In England and Wales it was very warm and very dry overall. There was a record breaking heatwave during the second week when temperatures reached 30°C somewhere for 10 consecutive days and exceeded 35°C in many places on the 6th, 9th and 10th. 38.1°C was claimed by Gravesend on the 10th, a new UK record. On the same day as records were being set, thunderstorms in northern regions caused flooding and devastation. Locally, 48mm of rain fell in 15 minutes, and as the air cooled, 2cm of hailstones covered the ground. Dubbed a 'mini tornado' by local newspaper, the storm blew up from nowhere and tore through the countryside, bringing down power lines. Despite this, it has been the driest and sunniest August since 1995, and the warmest since 1997.



Stylidium graminifolium

*****

2003 was welcomed in with snow showers and nighttime temperatures of -6°C. The second half of the month was much milder, with blizzards returning at the end of January.

In the greenhouse, *Clematis petriei* was covered in buds as was *Indigofera australis*. The intense cold damaged the new top growth on *Pseudopanax lessonii* 'Gold Splash' (GH). By the second week of February frogs were waking up after spending winter in the depths of the pond. Flocks of goldfinches feasted on niger seed as well as the seed heads of perennial salvias. The first frog spawn appeared on 26 February. The mild weather of February started the grass back into growth and at the end of the month the lawn mower was in use.

A visit to RHS Harlow Carr in early March resulted in another purchase - *Clematis marmoraria*. This was planted in a trough along with a young plant of *Stylidium graminifolium* sent to me this spring by APS member Dennis Rowlinson, as a replacement for one young plant also supplied by Dennis in 2002, which died after being constantly uprooted by a blackbird.

Mid March also saw the red pea-shaped flowers on *Templetonia retusa* (GH). *Indigofera australis* (GH) continued to provide its mauve display.

Towards the end of March tiny tadpoles were to be seen in the ponds. Another acquisition, *Hebe pimeleoides* 'Quicksilver' was planted in the front garden. This much-branched and spreading hebe has intense silvery grey foliage, the leaves being small - just 4mm x 2mm. The flowering racemes are bluish purple in colour.

March 2003 has been the sunniest March across Britain for more than 40 years. It was also a very dry month.

Late March/early April saw a pair of robins build a nest in the greenhouse. Five eggs were laid, all of which hatched and fledged.

New additions to my collection, bought in April, include *Hebe diosmifolia, Dicksonia squarrosa* (a tree fern from New Zealand), *Hibbertia aspera, Prostanthera melissifolia* and *Aciphylla aurea*, the last three obtained at the Harrogate Spring Flower Show. *Hebe diosmifolia* is a low growing shrub which produces corymbs of purplish flowers, which fade to white, crowded at the end of the branches. *Hibbertia aspera* is an Australian shrub, resembling a groundcover hypericum. Green spoon-shaped foliage provides a backdrop for large 5-petalled yellow flowers which are produced over a long period. *Prostanthera melissifolia*, the Balm Mint Bush is an aromatic upright shrub with mauve tubular flowers.

Aciphylla aurea (which unfortunately had a short life with me!), is commonly known as the New Zealand Golden Spaniard, a spiky plant with golden leaves rising from the base, all with an extremely sharp point, which was very useful for pushing my way through the crowds! Several times I noticed people jump to one side as I passed by. It was only when I looked down that I noticed that the carrier bag housing the plant, had been pierced in many places where the ferocious spines had pushed through.

Akebia quinata (China, Korea, Japan), planted and trained against a southfacing wall, flowered for the first time in mid April, at the same time as the arrival of the swallows.

Late April - flowerbuds on *Clematis gentianoides* (GH). In bloom were *Viola betonicifolia* (GH) and *Alyogyne* 'Santa Cruz'(GH) while *Templetonia retusa* (GH) continued its scarlet display of pea-type flowers.

Late April was the time to see newts swimming in the pond and laying eggs amongst the pond weed, coinciding with the arrival of the housemartins. Seven nests were built under the eaves this year.

Celmisia ramulosa, bought last April and overwintered outside, put on a show of six white daisies in early May. The grey spoon-shaped foliage of *Corokia* x *virgata* was covered in a myriad of tiny yellow 5-petalled flowers. Two of my three clumps of *P. tenax* produced flower spikes. *Callistemon speciosus*, growing in the greenhouse border began opening its spikes of red stamens in late May.

As they do every year, the various eucalypts flowered from early June starting with *Eucalyptus pauciflora* and subsp *niphophila*, then subsp *debeuzevillei*. *Prostanthera cuneata*

was in full bloom by this time. Greenhouse-grown bottlebrushes (unnamed) and *Melaleuca hypericifolia* (GH) produced lots of flower spikes, the former all scarlet, the honeymyrtle orange-red.

Co-habiting a pot kept permanently on the patio wall are *Clematis gentianoides*, *Ophiopogon planiscapus* 'Nigrescens' and *Libertia ixioides*. By mid June the former plant had several large creamy white 6-petalled flowers (some petals as long as 35mm), which seemed to be magnets for pollen beetles.

On the same wall two pots containing four plants of *Brachyscome* 'Blue Haze' successfully overwintered outside, formed 4 tight green cushions covered in blue-mauve daisies with yellow eyes.

An unnamed dwarf leptospermum, with dark green needle-like leaves, growing in the large scree bed was covered in deep pink flowers. Nearby *Parahebe* 'Kea' was also in bloom - tiny white flowers with violet striations.

In the front garden *Linum monogynum* was in full bloom, its small white flowers nestling amongst its fine foliage.

In August *Bursaria spinosa* put on its usual display of creamy white flowers. After flowering it was clipped using an electric hedge trimmer, along with *Pittosporum tenuifolium*, *P. tenuifolium* 'Silver Queen' and *Olearia* x *scilloniensis*. *Olearia nummularifolia*, a much slower-growing daisy bush, flowered in early July.

A new acquisition, *Prostanthera rotundifolia*, bought in Setember at Helmsley Walled Garden, brings my Australian mint collection to four species:- *cuneata* (two plants in the garden), *melissifolia* and *sieberi* (young plant obtained from Jeff Irons) in the greenhouse.

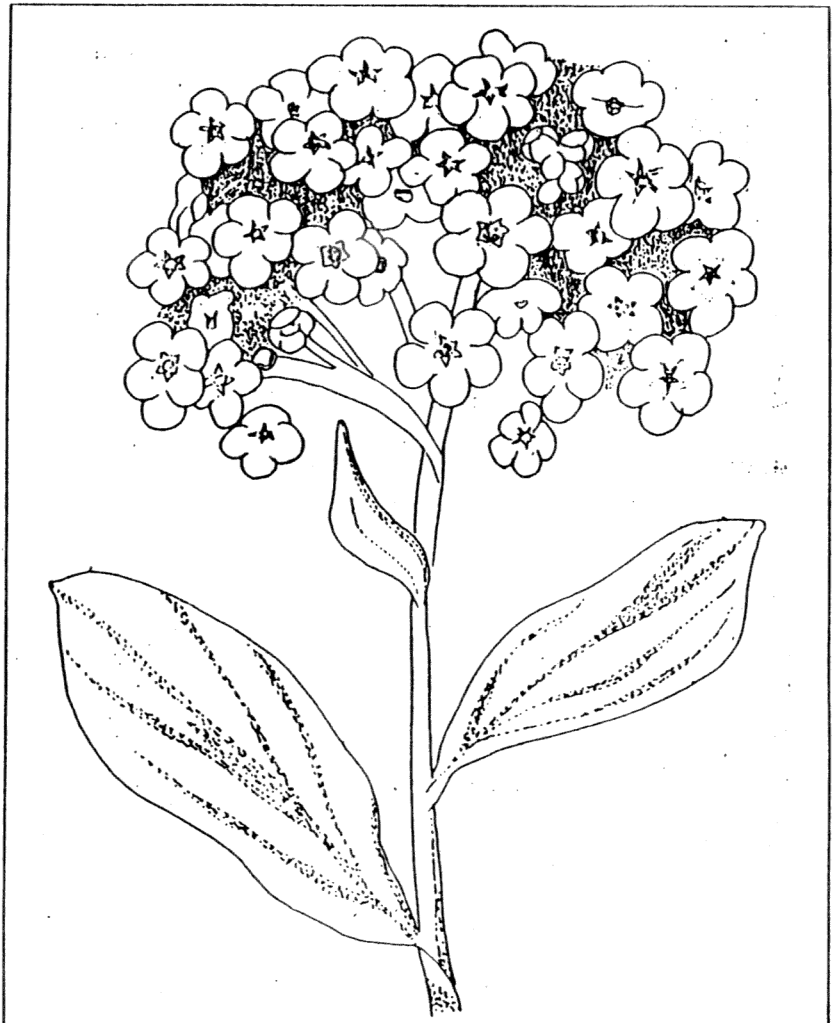
Casualties and Survivors of Winter

Two specimens of *Solanum laciniatum*, growing in half barrels against the west wall of the house, appeared badly wilted after a week of cold conditions at the beginning of January : snow showers and night-time temperatures of -6C. The second half of the month was much milder, with blizzards returning at the end of January. As the weeks passed, all the foliage became limp and frosted. Although both plants were badly affected by the frost, only one died. The other reshooted from the base. A replacement was planted in the other barrel. By mid June both plants were covered in mauve flowers.

(In 2000 I sowed seed of *Solanum lacinatum*. One resulting seedling was cultivated for the next three years in the greenhouse. In July of this year it was transplanted into the front garden close to *Acnistus australis* mentioned below. It will be interesting to see how it overwinters.)

Another survivor of the relatively mild winter was *Acnistus australis* (native of Chile), which started flowering in June - mid-blue bells. Planted in the front garden in a sheltered spot, it lost all its leaves in the winter, leafing up again in late spring In a southfacing border there were yellow fragrant flowers on *Cytisus battandieri*.

Several plants succumbed over winter, two despite spending the winter months on the kitchen windowsill - seedlings of *Acradenia frankliniae* and *Hovea elliptica*. *Olearia semidentata* 'Henry Travers' died after being left on the patio too long in the wet autumn. Rescued too late and put in the greenhouse, it never recovered. Another casualty of the winter was *Lophomyrtus* x *ralphii* 'Pixie', a plant bought last year and grown in the greenhouse. The foliage gradually blackened during the early part of the year.



Myosotidium hortensia

Because of the unwieldy weight of two ceramic containers housing specimens of *Myosotidium hortensia*, I had decided to overwinter them outside. Frosty nights in February

blackened the foliage which in turn collapsed and withered. Thankfully, although the nights were cold, the days were sunny, and my two Chatham Island Forget-Me-Nots survived their first outdoor winter. I'm not sure that I'll risk leaving them to the open elements again though - I expect that I have just been lucky this time. Despite their unhappy start to the year, *Myosotidium hortensia* produced several developing clusters of flowerbuds which started opening in May to reveal wonderful blue flowers. By the end of May when the plants were in full bloom, there were 13 large blue clusters.

For the first time a few seeds were set on *Myosotidium hortensia*. Hoping to increase my number of Chatham Island Forget-Me-Nots, I have sown some fresh seed; one seedling emerged towards the end of September.

The Chatham Island Forget-Me-Not is a large bold plant with foliage which easily rivals that of hostas. Growing upto 60-90cm in height, the dinner plate-sized boldly ribbed leaves are glossy green in colour. Above the leaves form dense clusters upto 15cm across of sky blue flowers. On the Chatham Islands, this forget-me-not is constantly under threat mainly due to over-grazing and trampling by animals. Cultivating it can be difficult. It requires a rich, moist humus/peaty soil but with good drainage. It is believed that mulching with seaweed is beneficial but I've found that feeding with a seaweed-based fertiliser is sufficient to encourage flowering and maintain good foliage colour.

The two plants I grow are now seven years old. Sown in 1996, using seed from the AGS seedlist, the two resulting seedlings were repotted annually, until their final repotting in 2002. These final pots are 45cm deep and 40cm across. After germination in 1996, the first flowering occurred in May 1997, and there has been blooming annually ever since.

Myosotidium hortensia does not like prolonged severe frost and may lose most of its foliage as a result. If the plant must be overwintered outside, cloche or fleece protection is recommended.

A Year for 'Firsts'

2003 has been a year for 'firsts'; the first flowering of several plants, some several years old, others still young plants. In mid March fluffy yellow pompons decorated *Acacia dealbata* six months after it started developing flowering spikes. More pompons could be seen at the beginning of July when *Acacia brachybotrya*, a young plant given by Dennis Rowlinson last year, started blooming. Mid-October, and its still blooming.

This April I noticed flowers on *Griselinia littoralis*, although they were small, greenish yellow insignificant ones.

In late April a flower spike started forming on *Stylidium graminifolium*, one of two young plants obtained from APS member Dennis Rowlinson in 2002. The other plant unfortunately died after constant uprooting by a blackbird. Dennis has generously sent me a replacement. *Stylidium graminifolium*, or Trigger Plant as it is commonly known, is found in Tasmania and the eastern Mainland States. It can be very variable. My plants are tufted perennials with basal rosettes of stiff, erect, linear glossy leaves upto 24cm long. From this rosette rises a stiff and leafless flower stalk, the top third to half of the stalk being covered with numerous pink flowers with a white centre.

I mentioned in the last issue that I grow this species in a lightweight trough, made from a polymer resin material. The reason for this is that because of their ease of lifting, I can move vulnerable plants into the greenhouse during the worst of the winter weather. The compost I use for planting these troughs is, by volume - one third each : peat-free compost (based on composted bark), John Innes loam-based compost and horticultural grit.

Another 'first' this year was the flowering of *Phormium cookianum* - two spikes, about a metre in length; not as showy as those of *Phormium tenax*.

Pseudopanax lessonii 'Trident', bought in April 2002, produced tiny green flowers in August after developing clusters of flowerbuds at the top of the plant in early July.

Germination Successes and Subsequent Failures

2003 has had mixed fortunes regarding seed germination and the subsequent growing on the seedlings. I was so pleased when seeds of *Hakea victoria, Hakea dactyloides,* and *Banksia ericifolia* var *ericifolia* successfully germinated, but within weeks all the resulting seedlings were dead! Just one seed of *Swainsona formosa* germinated and at present I still have the one seedling, although it is struggling. Other seedlings still surviving are *Anigozanthos manglesii* and *Clematis recta*.

Other Losses during the Year

One loss this summer has been *Aciphylla aurea*. Bought in April, it died in early September after rotting at the base. I suspect that I misjudged the amount of watering required during the hot summer.

Other losses this year have been *Carex buchananii*, a containerised outdoor plant, and *Sophora* 'Garden Gnome' (greenhouse culture).

Sue Hyams

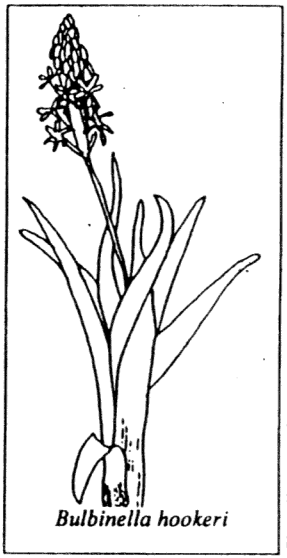
Bulbinella hookeri

Bulbs and bulb like plants are popular in most gardens whether grown by ordinary gardeners or enthusiasts; here is one that is less common, which the uninitiated might like to grow. It has a common name in New Zealand, its country of origin, of Maori Onion, because if its leaves are crushed they emit an onion-like smell. It occurs in both islands usually on the lower slopes of mountains up to 3000ft or more. In the foothills it is a very common plant, for being unpalatable to sheep and resistant to fire, it spreads freely. It tends to occur in gravelly soils although it is common alongside mountain streams.

There is a fleshy root which is most usually dormant in winter and in springtime sends up a tuft of rather fleshy, lax leaves from which arise several spikes of yellow flowers which have

an odd fragrance; these flowers resemble those of the British Bog asphodel, *Narthecium ossifragum*.

As might be expected with a plant of wide distribution and altitude range, considerable variation occurs in both leaf and flower. Forms from low altitudes can be coarse with substantial leaves and flower stems up to 3ft with well spaced flowers. Those from near the altitude limit are neater, more compact in flower arrangement and may not exceed 3 inches; in between these extremes, plant and flower form are very variable. Flowers also vary in intensity of colour, size of flowers and spacing on the flower stalk.



Bulbinella hookeri

In this country, this plant has never become popular, in part because of the onion smell but most probably because poorer forms are those most widely available. A good form of this plant is a desirable addition to a rock garden or mixed border. Plant in full sun in a poor gravelly soil. In a harsh regime it stays in character and flowers well but in shade or a rich soil it grows rank and flowers sparsely. Plant young, in early spring as new growth begins to show, it seems indifferent to soil. The first flush of flowers is May or June but flowers can be produced sporadically throughout summer or autumn.

It is offered for sale by a few suppliers. Do not buy unseen. Mostly garden centres sell plants in flower and it is desirable that a purchaser can see, size, habit and flower quality. Seed has been offered by the APS. Sow thinly on receipt of seed and place in frame or glasshouse. Germination is usually quick and seedlings can be separated and potted as soon as large enough to handle. Plant out in the year following sowing.

Brian Halliwell

Australian Plants in Denmark June 20th 2003

Extracts from letters received from our Danish member, Sören Stöcker

The May 2003 issue of Pentachondra interested me greatly, especially the article about *Prostanthera*. Until a few years ago no lignous Australian plant could be considered hardy under traditional gardening conditions here in Denmark. Then one day I passed a large, evidently old, plant of *Prostanthera cuneata*. It was growing in the front garden on a house in the suburb of Lind, just outside the city of Herning and near the local plant centre, Kollund Planteskole. I soon found out that the Kollund Plant Centre had supplied the *Prostanthera* and discussing the matter with the owner, Mr Iver Andersen I tried to learn more about the origin of this plant. - the first really hardy 'Aussie' in a Danish garden but apart from the fact that it was a Dutch import learnt nothing. You can understand my delight when reading the article, which gave information on the Dutch commercial origin of the *Prostanthera* as well as news about other prostantheras in cultivation in Britain.

When, in my schoolboy years, I started out as a gardener I had the good fortune to befriend one of the very few Danish dendrologists who had actually collected in nature (mainly southern South America), which introduced my tender mind to the idea of provenance collection, originally developed by forestry scientists to seek out hardy and fast growing timber suited to local soils and forestry conditions. This way of approaching plant culture has proved valuable in a 'difficult' sub-continental climate such as that of Denmark/southern Scandinavia, and most especially when it comes to southern hemisphere plants. They all come from climates that are only marginally comparable to ours. In order to survive here all have to selected very carefully for their potential hardiness and general robustness. Thus when I read that the *Prostanthera cuneata* material distributed by the Dutch derived from an 'obscure 1970's introduction in a British garden, I could not help myself from hoping that you might go a little deeper into this matter and try to find the precise source of this material, both as regards to the nursery or gardener who introduced and delivered the plant and to the provenance of the material.

As to provenance, this might point out other "hardy Aussies" occurring under the same conditions, and it may help us to determine whether the cultivated material actually represents the hardiest material to be expected. As to the nursery or gardener who introduced the material, this firm or person ought to be given their own place in horticultural history, at least here in southern Scandinavia, where this *Prostanthera* was the first plant to succeed and survive; even after this latest, hard, winter, with several nasty spells below -20°C.

Danish gardeners have dreamed about Australian plants for most of a century and the first mention of a hardy one was about 20 years ago. Mr Hugo Thomsen corresponded with Professor Otto Schwartz at the Jena Botanical garden in the then DDR. Around 1979 he wrote and told Schwartz about *Craspedia uniflora* raised from seeds that he had collected in the Australian Alps. When he wrote that they had YELLOW flowers Schwartz simply refused to believe him: craspedias had WHITE flowers, so Mr. Thomsen had looked at the wrong plants! (Ed. This confusion was present in England at the time. The NZ *C. uniflora* was regarded as occurring in both NZ and Australia, *C. glauca* was thought to be a synonym). Hugo Thomsen was perhaps Denmark's leading plant collector. He was co-founder and Honorary Member of the Danish AGS Group. Almost single handedly he built up alpine gardening and modern plant collecting in Denmark, after the unsuccessful and largely unsystematic attempts in the early 1920's and late 1950's had failed.

The "great prize of them all", of course, was the "hardy *Eucalyptus*", which has been somewhat like the Danish gardener's equivalent of the Loch Ness Monster, appearing in this or that garden after a series of mild winters, only to disappear after cold ones. One of the great heroes of the Danish Resistance fight against the German invasion of WWII, and a great industrial and silvicultural innovator, Mr Flemming Juncker, died recently at the ripe age of 97. In the 1960's he tried to collect and introduce Eucalyptus for Scandinavian culture. His material was grown both in the garden of Junckers large family estate in East Jutland, Overgaard, and in the large governmental plantation, Thorshavn, in the Danish Faroe islands of the N. Atlantic. Quite by chance I happened to visit a private garden near Overgaard in 1995 and enjoyed the sight of a nearly 7m tall, healthy and flowering *Eucalyptus*, which I was told derived from

second generation seeds from the *Eucalyptus* in the Overgaard park. Whether this individual, or the plants in the park still exist, I have been unable to establish because Mr Apollo (Juncker's Head of Forestry) has not answered my letters.

Then there are the Eucalyptus collections made as a result of the so-called Nordic Arboretum Committee: a committee formed by the Danish Hörsholm Arboretum, the Norwegian Milde Arboretum and the Arboretum under the Göteborg Botanic Gardens in Sweden , later associated with institutions in Finland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands.

A group from this committee collected in New Zealand, Tasmania and S.E. Australia in 1974-75, bringing home seeds I.A. 7 taxa of high altitude eucalypts, to be distributed, raised and tried in the plantations of these arboreta. A few years ago a collector in the Copenhagen area posted me a copy of a Swedish article on Eucalyptus culture, written by a young Swedish amateur dendrologist, Mr Pontus Aratoun., who had worked with a professional seed collector (David Kleinig?) in Australia and had apparently managed to introduce and grow a number of *Eucalyptus* species (*E. pauciflora ssp. debeuzevillei* was the most successful), as well as types of *Acacia, Callistemon* and *Leptospermum,* in a seaside garden close to Gothenburg. Apparently Mr. Aratoun had known and received inspiration to his introduction-work from the dendrologists at the Göteborg Botanic Garden, and yet Aratoun's article does not mention any results from growing the material brought home by the Committee. Trying to obtain information on this matter I have written to Aratoun but, as other collectors have also discovered, Aratoun does not answer letters sent to him, even if inviting correspondence and giving him information. He is presumed to be living in South America. If anyone reading this knows of him, please let us know.

On a more personal level, my own introduction to growing Australian plants in Denmark came around 1979, when I constructed a large peat garden in what was then my part of my parents garden at 15 Bygvaenget Street, here in Herning. I was still at school but had managed to keep some money from my confirmation party and by happy chance had discovered the last peat block producer in Denmark, Hesselskov Mosebrug, at the village of Kjellerup, not far from Herning. As my parents had added to

the house I was able to get the builders to dig out a large and deep hole in my garden, which I then constructed as a peat landscape, with steep peat block terraces, around a wet peat bog in the bottom. In this construction I was able to grow a great number of plants that have never been seen in the open in Denmark before or since. They included a large collection of petiolarid primulas, subspecies of *Omphalogramma* species, *Philesia buxifolia, Rhododendron ludlowii, Drimys winteri* var. *andina, Notholirion thompsonii* etc. but my special pride was a large collection of Australian alpine conifers. This included *Microstrobos fitzgeraldii* a species that would not have been expected to be hardy in Denmark, and which is often considered both 'difficult' and tender in Britain.

The great problem with a sub-continental gardening climate (which we share with S.W. Norway and Sweden, N.W. Germany and Benelux- perhaps even with inland and upland parts of Great Britain) is that it is too cold and dry for culture of plants from maritime climates and too 'soft' and unstable to allow the culture of truly continental plants. This problem has split our gardeners into two groups: the vast group of uninspired pessimists which has given up beforehand and wants gardening to concern itself only with those (few) plants that are hardy everywhere. And a much smaller group whose members believe that sub-continental means that it may be possible to tilt growing conditions towards either continental or maritime conditions, and then be able to grow a much richer garden flora than is generally recognised.

The peat block construction did just that. It tilted the growing conditions in a way that allowed mountain plants from continental monsoon Asia to stay frozen through all the perilous spring period around Easter, with dry windy and sunny days and frosty nights, that is the great killer in S. Scandinavian gardens. It provided a cool moist atmosphere throughout the growing season, ideal for 'cloud zone' plants like the ca. 150 taxa of rhododendrons and Australian mountain conifers that I grew there.

My interest in these conifers started when a collector friend took me with him to visit Mr. Tage Lundell in Helsingborg, Sweden: then the Grand Old Man of Scandinavian plant collection! We took back a very large collection of plant gifts, among which was a delicious wee conifer called *Microstrobos fitzgeraldii*. It haunted me. Firstly the plant

disliked green house conditions, and then I could not find any mention of it anywhere. Even the monumental work by Bean on Trees & Shrubs Hardy in the British Isles -which, volume by volume had been my birthday present for four birthdays- did not mention it. Slowly it dawned on me that there was new ground to be broken concerning Australian conifers, and one day I noticed a reference to an Australian nursery, the Yamina Rare Plants Nursery in Victoria. I contacted it and asked about conifers. To my delight it was able to supply me with every species I had asked about, and right up to 1995, when my parents sold their house, I cultivated a nice selection of Australian conifers, including *Microstrobos fitzgeraldii* and *M. niphophilus*, *Athrotaxis x laxifolia* and *Diselma archeri*, which I have since learnt from Brian Halliwell is not doing too well in British cultivation. In the autumn of 1984 I had just received a large import from Ken Gillanders (Ed. this nursery has closed) and had planted *Microcachrys tetragona* and *Athrotaxis selaginoides* in the peat garden when one of those icy winters set in. Usually they strike Danish gardens once in a lifetime. My parents sold their house in the following spring, and most of my plants had to be given away. I was amazed to find that every one of the conifers had survived and was sprouting, even if the foliage had been burnt. This survival was in a very special environment, in the peat garden, constructed in much the same way as a supermarket cold counter, designed to hold on to cold for as long as possible, staying permanently frozen from late October till late April, and providing a cool moist micro-climate in summer. These conditions can only be provided by a large peat block construction and may not be compared with culture under more 'normal' and general conditions. I thought of this recently, when looking at the badly burnt foliage of *Podocarpus lawrencei* "Blue Gem" and *P. alpinus* "Red Tips", supplied by the Kollund Plant Centre. Even covered by a thick layer of snow these plants barely survived under 'normal rock garden condition'; whereas *P. lawrencei* and *P. acutifolius* survived the 1984/85 winter in peat garden conditions without harm.

My experiences with this limited range of plants indicates that it would probably be possible to grow a wide range of Australia's cool climate plants in Scandinavia's coastal fringes. All that is required is for some adventurous person to introduce and try them.

Kangaroo Paws in France...

Tim Darrington

I reply to Tim Longville's article on Kangaroo Paws. I have been trying to grow *A. flavidus, A manglesii* and *A. humilis* for 3 or 4 seasons now and for the first time I had a flowering head in June this year on one of the *A. flavidus* specimens that survived winter. I was somewhat disappointed by the "boring" green colour of the flowers, but I consider it "worth it" because, like the marsupials they are named after, the kangaroo paw is typical of the exotic side of australian flora.

For the record, I live in the Rhône valley, just south of Lyon (~ 45° lat.) with a continental climate. The specimen that flowered was sown in January 2002 from seeds bought in W. Australia, inside the house at ~20°C constant temperature. It was potted on twice, finally into a 7 litre deep rose container and during the winter 2002-2003 was kept inside the house at between 3° and 8°C in a north facing window. In the spring 2003, I repotted it again into a 15 litre plastic tub. For the potting mix I use cheap peat substitute mixed with either sand or the rather gritty soil from our garden. I do not give it any fertiliser.

A. flavidus specimens I have tried to overwinter outside do not survive lower than about -6°C and even those that do survive do not flourish in the spring. I have concluded that for our climate, where only a few nights per year at -6°C constitutes a "mild" winter, the only solution is to overwinter kangaroo paws inside. I have not had much success with *A. humilis*; they tend to die off when still relatively small, and *A. manglesii* suffers much more from ink spot disease which gets a hold during the dark winter.



Anigozanthos manglesii

Upto now Tim Longville might well be conforted in his opinion that Kangaroo Paws are not really worth the trouble in the UK, however here is the twist. My mother, on her way home from holiday, stopped off at Hestercombe Gardens (Somerset) and there she brought me a plant sold under the name of "A. flavidus". Whatever it is, it is clearly

a dwarf variety, much smaller than anything I have seen in W. Australia. It was sold in a 1,5 litre container, with masses of flowering heads, its leaves are not more than 20cm high and the flowering heads which are a lovely reddish colour not more than 30 cm high. This dwarf variety would definitely be "success" and "worth it", so I've rapidly tried to divide it and I shall endeavour to collect the seed, which I hope will be viable.

I for one have not yet given up on Kangaroo Paws!

Kangaroo Paws

Brian Halliwell

Tim Longville in the May issue (no.30) asks about successes with Kangaroo Paws. At Kew, ***Anigozanthos viridis*** was reasonably hardy and survived outside against the foot of a south facing wall for many years. Established plants were divided every third year to keep them young and vigorous. During the 1980's plants were often damaged in the cold winters of that decade but they were to grow away and subsequently flower. Unfortunately the dull green flowers of this species, made it the least desirable of an interesting group of plants. As I was fascinated by the genus I obtained seed of as many species as possible. All subsequent plants raised from this seed failed to survive outside the first winter. Although I failed with Kangaroo paws as perennials I had some success when I treated them as annuals. Seed was sown very thinly in small containers in mid April with undisturbed pots of seedlings planted out during the first week of June in a sunny border where the sandy soil was acid. Flowering would begin in September and last until the first frosts arrived; between 3 & 6 weeks. Perhaps if I was to sow earlier, I would have longer flowering but this was not to be. Seedlings from pre-April sowings could not tolerate low light being yellow, thin, spindly and subject to damping-off diseases.

I can remember only two species which were successful as annuals: *A. **flavidus*** and *A. **humilis*** but there were others. *A. **manglesii*** with its brilliant green flowers, probably my favourite, was not amongst my successes. In fact I found it difficult at all stages and it never survived a winter under protection. The Black Kangaroo Paw ***Macropidia fuliginosa*** was another of my failures, I never even succeeded in germinating seed.

Felix Jury - Gardener & Plant Breeder

by
Peter Thompson

In Britain, farming and gardening, despite their affinities, are things apart. Farmer's wives may be gardeners; farmers themselves seem almost immune to the gardening bug. This is not so in New Zealand where many of the best gardeners were farmers before they took to gardening.

One of these was Felix Jury who lived north of New Plymouth at Tikorangi, a short way inland when the most boisterous aspects of the Tasman Sea are reduced to tolerable levels, but its influence is still strong enough to ensure almost frost-free conditions. The climate is mild and moist, prolonged heat or drought in summer are unusual, and the garden is remarkable for the wide range of plants - from sub-tropical to cool temperate origins - that thrive in it.

Felix's grandfather arrived here in the 1880's and built the first homestead, and planted a screen of rimus to shelter it from the wind. Felix too worked the family farm - although even the latent interests surfaced in the form of a four acre paddock that he could not resist planting up with a collection of rhododendrons imported from England. Meanwhile his wife, Mimosa, created an attractive garden around the house, and laid the foundations for a remarkable one beneath the now mature screen of rimus.

Today, Felix's magic forest is pure theatre, and views through the ascending trunks of the rimus *(Dacrydium cupressinum)*, clothed in strips of flaking grey bark beneath their trailing foliage strongly resemble stage sets.

There is an air of enchantment about this small garden - entering it is a step into a shadowy, green and shaded world of its own, set apart from the garden bathed in sunlight beyond the compass of the trees. Swiss cheese plants climb the trunks and sprawl over the branches; their enormous, glossy deep green leaves adding surreal touches of the tropics to the set. Below them the pure bright tones of vireya rhododendrons - orange and yellow, scarlet, cerise and creamy white - catch and reflect the shafts of sunlight that penetrate the canopy of the trees, and hostas, bromeliads, ferns and filmy ferns, astelias, and trilliums crowd together beside the paths.

We were met on arrival by Felix's son, Mark. A minute or two later Felix entered bearing a hoe. Slightly built, and frail looking - fighting, I learnt later, the cancer that would kill him within a year - he was the epitome of a gardener in his garden, dressed in gardener's clothes, including a tweed trilby hat of remarkable age, grubbiness and character. Nevertheless there was a quality about him, that transcended his outward

appearance, that could almost be described as dapper. Something about his demeanour conveyed an inner sense of precision and style; a commitment to detail and an alert awareness of the world about him.

He greeted us a little vaguely, then warmly as I mentioned that I had written earlier to arrange the visit. Then, leaning his hoe against the wall of the potting shed, he firmly instructed us to join him on a tour of his garden. We followed him along the path beneath the rimus, and back round the house. As we went he talked about his garden - of course - and also about the plant breeding work that has brought him an international reputation.

The list of 'Jury' plants is long and growing longer, since Mark now maintains the tradition started by his father. Amongst many garden treasures from this stable are several beautiful rhododendron hybrids. There are 'Bernice' a sumptuous glowing red maddenii hybrid, 'Felicity Fair'- amber and yellow and 'Moon Orchid' with fragrant, light yellow trumpet flowers, suffused on the outside with pink and with frilled margins to the lobes of the petals.

'Jury's Yellow' is a famous and highly individual double flowered, creamy yellow camellia; another is 'Fairy Blush' with miniature, lightly fragrant, single apple blossom flowers capable of flowering non-stop for nearly six months - and there is 'Itty Bitty' another true miniature with double lavender flowers like tiny anemones. Worldwide, gardeners are probably most indebted to Felix for the magnolias that he has bred. No one who sees *Magnolia campbellii* doing its stuff in a garden in Cornwall or Washington State in spring can come away unimpressed, and almost certainly jealous of the fortunate gardener who grows it. Acquisition hopes are usually dashed by the discovery that a plant bought today will probably not begin to produce flowers for 20 years or more.

By a stroke of luck, or the good fortune that fate sometimes grants to those who deserve it - even sometimes to those who don't - Felix acquired a form of this magnolia that began to flower profusely after only a few years, and is one of the secrets of his success as a breeder.

He bought the plant from Hillier's Nursery and it was labelled 'Lanarth', but it soon became obvious this was no 'Lanarth', and he named it 'Mark Jury' after his son. He crossed it with some of the *M.* x *soulangeana* hybrids and it proved to be an outstanding parent whose offspring inherited its strongly fragrant flowers, and the ability to produce them precociously on young plants.

One excellent, increasingly popular, hybrid is 'Apollo' with large star-shaped deep violet flowers. Another is 'Vulcan'. For the first year or two its flowers tend to be a

disappointingly pallid version of the deep reddish purple blooms of older plants, but they steadily gain in strength as the plant matures. The undoubted star of the show has turned out to be 'Iolanthe'. She was very nearly abandoned as an unflowered seedling, when Felix planted her temporarily by his gate, intending to give her away. He forgot to do so, and when 'Iolanthe' flowered for the first time when only three years old it was immediately obvious that she had exceptional promise. Her globular, soft rose pink flowers are large, and she produces a succession of buds so all is not over for the year when frosts strike in spring, but another batch open to replace them.

Felix's interest in rhododendrons started with conventional kinds - a collection imported from England and planted in his four acre paddock. Then he came across an entirely novel kind of rhododendron, that gave him insights into what rhododendrons might be.

Vireya rhododendrons were almost unknown until recently except to the most dedicated rhododendron aficionados. They are at home amongst mosses and ferns on the branches of trees in the montane forests that run down through south east Asia into Malaysia, and along Indonesia to New Guinea - one species has even succeeded in crossing the Timor Sea to establish itself in the rainforests of Cape York in northern Queensland. Few, if any, are hardy enough to survive out of doors except in almost frost-free gardens, but unlike other rhododendrons, most produce flowers twice or even three times a year. Because they are naturally epiphytic, they grow extremely well in hanging baskets, and make excellent plants in a conservatory, but have not yet made much impact in that direction.

Once tempted by them, Felix failed to resist and arranged a visit to New Guinea where he collected a number of vireyas, crossing one with another after returning home - hoping to produce new kinds that could be grown in gardens.

Some of the most attractive hybrids of these novel rhododendrons were born and bred at Tikorangi. 'Cherry Pie' is one with large, heavily textured, translucent cerise flowers. 'Golden Charm' is another, this time with creamy yellow to rich apricot flowers set off by glossy foliage and crimson stems. 'Hot Gossip' has tubular, rich claret red flowers and attractive leaves with crimson stems and 'Silken Shimmer' s notable for its large clove-scented, lilac pink flowers. The names alone convey something of the impact provided by the sight of these lovely plants.

For many years, Felix nursed an ambition to breed a pink celmisia. A bee in his bonnet - an unfulfilled ambition of the kind that afflicts all plant breeders. Celmisias produce white daisies - some with flowers as small as the daisy that grows on lawns, others large enough to cover the palm of a hand. The

latter are magnificent, with substantial flowers and pure white petals - but Felix saw their whiteness as a challenge, and longed to breed a bright pink one. He found a plant which produced flowers with a pinkish flush to the petals, and made repeated attempts to increase its pinkness - without a great deal of success. The colour intensified slightly, but the goal eluded him. Frustratingly, a 'celmisia' with deep pink flowers does exist. It grows on Campbell Island and on the Auckland Islands in the Southern Ocean between New Zealand and Antarctica, and is a plant of the utmost splendour with impressive rosettes of broad, half metre long, deeply pleated leaves, and robust flower stems bearing trusses of pink to deep magenta flowers with dark eyes. However, although a close relative, it is not quite a celmisia - botanists classify it as a Pleurophyllum - and more than traditional plant breeding techniques would be needed to transfer its genes to a true celmisia.

Felix Jury was a plant breeder of the old school; a private breeder who bred plants on his own terms, in his style - for the thrill of it; and very few others have been so successful. His son Mark continues the good work but not many of their kind are left today. With the advent of the transgenic techniques encompassed by genetic engineering, and the increasing involvement of large corporations in plant breeding and marketing, there will be even fewer in the future.

Next year, at a garden centre near you.... look out for -

* Leptospermum Collection consisting of Pink Queen, Pompom, Red Damask and Snow White.
* *Alyogyne huegelii* 'Santa Cruz' with mauve-purple satiny flowers throughout the summer.
* *Astelia nervosa* 'Westland' - the silvery leaves with a bronze tint turn red in colder areas.
* *Hoheria sexstylosa* 'Stardust' is a very floriferous and compact form of the New Zealand Ribbonwood. An upright evergreen shrub with white flowers.
* Don't forget all those 'summer bedding' plants, such as the many Brachyscomes and Scaevolas. Some of these young 'starter' plants appear as early as late January and often have limited availability.

HAS **FROST** THE **SAME EFFECT** ON HAKEA SEED RELEASE **AS FIRE?**

APS member Chris Kleiss, from the Netherlands, emailed me the following short article about hakea seed release.

For many years I have specialised in the culture of members of the Proteaceae family, in containers, as a hobby, here in Holland. I cultivate about 100 botanical species. For the past five years I have also experimented with some species in the open ground : so far I have tried *Banksia integrifolia, Hakea salicifolia, Hakea microcarpa* and *Hakea sericea*. They have survived a few mild winters but once in a while we get a more severe period of frost which lasts during the day as well as the night.

I live on the milder side of Holland, here in a suburb of Amsterdam, about 25 kilometres from the seacoast. The garden lies about 4 metres below sealevel, and is a west facing situation, with a sandy/clayish soil.

The only species still surviving in the open ground is *Hakea microcarpa*, all the others perished this past winter. The curious thing is that both *Hakea salicifolia* and *Hakea siricea* which were killed by frost this winter, released their seeds this spring. The harvested seed was apparently viable, producing many seedlings.

- Would frost have the same effect on the seed release as fire???

So far I have not come across any reference regarding this phenomena.

- Has any other reader had this experience?
- Has any reader/member any luck with viable seed production in european homegrown proteaceae either in containers or in the open ground.

My containerised plants, in barrels and pots, are outside between mid March and mid November.



Hakea salicifolia

If you wish to email Chris, the contact address is sleumerodendron@hotmail.com

The Aussie-Pack New Third Edition

The new 3rd edition, updated and enlarged, of the Aussie-Pack is now available. For the benefit of recently-joined members this contains a huge store of information about Australian plants, 127 pages of A4 size, bound and with a laminated cover.

There are 5 sections -

1. Maps, directories of nurseries, seedsmen, cultivars, books, website, etc.
2. Phyto-ecological information on different areas of Australia and botanical family classifications.
3. An A-Z (Acacia - Zieria) of 35 important genera, with sections on Tasmanian and tropical Queensland plants.
4. Advice on propagation and culture indoors and outdoors in the UK.
5. A short section for visitors to Australia - botanic gardens and wildflower sites.

The price (at cost) is £5.50, which includes p&p of £1.35. I believe this is excellent value for money, when you consider that the price of a nursery catalogue nowadays may be £2-3.

PLUS IN THIS EDITION, a six-page colour supplement of over 50 illustrations of the genera covered.

SPECIAL OFFER - TO THOSE MEMBERS WHO PURCHASED THE FIRST EDITION : Price then £3.50, in 1999 - early 2000 (I have your names!). Have the new one for only £3.50 : the first edition, I admit, was poorly produced and contained a lot of internet downloads; there are much less in the new edition and more information overall.

Please note that this pack is what it says, and does not contain any New Zealand information. It is unlikely that there will be any further editions, at least at anything like this price, as the office that produces this has now closed.

Please send orders to me. Cheques payable to APS.

Comment by one member - "a gold mine of information. I don't see how you can sell it so cheaply"

Tony Entwistle

PENTACHONDRA INDEX

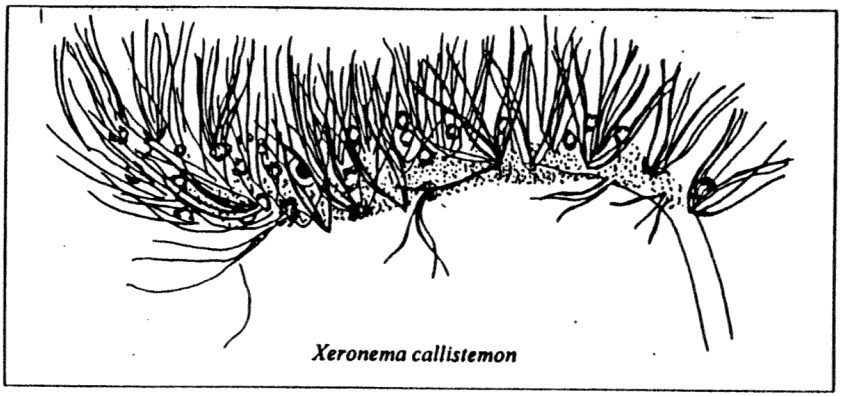
Many thanks to Pat Anderson for producing the latest 'Five Year Index', which you should have received with this newsletter.

Tresco Again

I revisited Tresco again at the end of May - later than my previous visits.

The Abbey Gardens were very colourful with a predominantly Canarian and South African display. Aeoniums in every crevice had plumes of gold and yellow, huge spikes of *Echium pinniana* and the deeper blue of *E.* x *scilloniense*, and Argyanthemums, lots of "mesembryanthemums" in every shade, Pelargoniums, Watsonias, Gazanias and *Senecio glastifolius*.

The Puyas were flowering magnificently, the huge *P. chilensis* in greeny, luminous yellow some 10' high. In their native habitat they would be attracting hummingbirds, here it was starlings seeking the nectar and emerging with orange heads! The somewhat smaller *P. berteroniana* was displaying its extraordinary flowers, an indescribable colour - a sort of jade-blue.



Xeronema callistemon

From Mexico *Beschorneria yuccoides* had long wands of red flowers, and there were several giant towers of the chandeliers of *Furcraea longaeva* some 10-15' high.

There were few Australian plants in flower, apart from a large *Banksia integrifolia* and *Dryandra formosa*. The garden has a good range of Hakeas, Callistemons, Melaleucas and Correas. The Eucalyptus field has now become a forest and many have had to be severely cut back.

Of the New Zealanders, there are of course many Hebes, including a large old tree of *H. gigantea*, which I defy anyone to recognise as a Hebe. There are many Pseudopanax, but the finest foliage tree was *Meryta sinclairii* (from

Three Kings Islands, which must be about as far north as you can get in NZ). A spectacular clump in full bloom of the vivid *Xeronema callistemon* (from Poor Knights Islands) was, the curator Mike Nelhams told me, the finest ever seen in the garden.

There are many Restios in the garden, I think all South African, and of course tree-ferns.

Nor should I forget the wild flowers of Tresco - in one area a display reminding me of Western Australia, of red campion and hogweed. On the cliffs there was sea thrift, sea campion and sea spurrey in profusion. There are quite a few naturalised species on Tresco - *Gladiolus byzantinus*, Watsonias, Leptospermum, Suttonia and *Solanum aviculare*, though this latter is removed when recognised as the orange fruits attract children and are very poisonous, and the pretty blue small irid *Aristea ecklonii* is widespread.

Tony Entwistle

Xeronema callistemon, also known as Poor Knights Lily, is a robust plant with foliage resembling that of an iris. The leaves can be upto 100cm long and 5cm wide. The red inflorescence, resembling a one-sided bottlebrush, can be upto 35cm in length and is usually held horizontally. Best containerised in the UK as it is frost tender and requires winter protection. It needs perfect drainage. One successful method of cultivation is to use drain-pipes, filling the bottom half with rubble for drainage, and the top half with a fibrous mixture, planting the lily at the top.

Apologies

I may need to apologise to some members who may have emailed me items for this issue which I may not have received. I had initially experienced difficulties with my email server in late July, a problem that I thought was resolved when I finally managed to access my account in early August. At the time dozens of messages were received, and I just filtered out the urgent ones, leaving the others to read later. However, days later my laptop failed. As a result, I had to have the hard drive flattened, meaning that I lost everything including all the messages. So if you sent me something expecting to see it in this issue and its not here, I apologise.

Sue Hyams

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