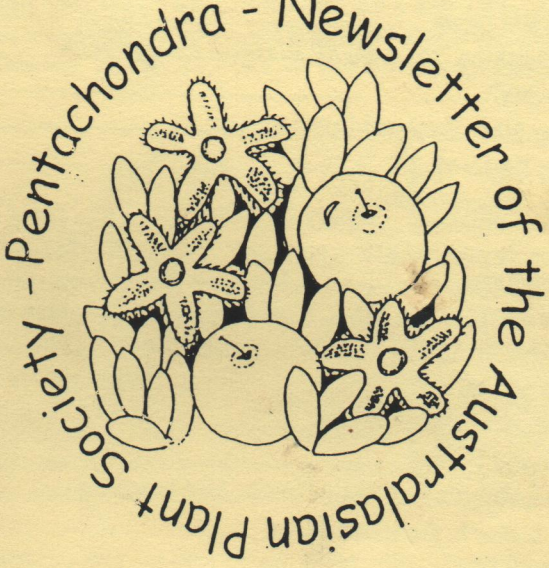


Issue 32 May 2004

AUSTRALASIAN PLANT SOCIETY

Newsletter No. 32
May 2004

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Editorial

Following Tony Entwistle's article in the previous issue about whether or not the Society should expand to include the flora of South Africa/South America, an influx of correspondence resulted, with contributions from first-timers. Its good to know some people read their newsletter! You can read their comments and possibly send in your own for the next issue. The more views we have, the better.

Many thanks for all submitted articles for this issue. The deadline for the next issue is October 16th. Articles can be emailed, or sent on floppy or cd disk. Acceptable formats are Microsoft Word, RFT and TXT. Typewritten articles are also acceptable. Please send submitted articles to Sue Hyams, Applegarth, Knayton, Thirsk, Y07 4AS, or email to sue.hyams@ic24.net.

AGM 12.06.04

This year's AGM will be held at Bicton College, Budleigh Salterton, Devon, on Saturday, 12th June. The college is providing us with a room for the meeting and this will be available from 1pm onwards. The meeting will start at 2pm prompt. Light refreshments will be available for a nominal charge. Assuming the weather is kind to us, there will be a guided tour of the college's grounds and gardens, giving us the opportunity to see their National Collection of Pittosporum and their recently designated National Collection of Podocarpus, as well as many unusual plants that flourish in the college's sheltered surroundings. If we are rained off, Jeff Irons promises to entertain us with a slide show.

There is a location map for the college, along with directions, on Bicton's website: www.bicton.ac.uk. Click on the Contact Us link, & then click onView Map. If any members intending to attend the AGM are not on-line, ask Einion Hughes for directions. He can be contacted either by post or by 'phone (01745 334077). He will print out the relevant webpage and forward it to them.

Members are very welcome to bring along plants for sale or exchange. What better way to increase your collection and get all the information needed to succeed with them?

We would love to see as many members as possible so please do try to attend.

Northern Meeting '04

Dennis Rowlinson would like to invite all Northern members of the Society to a meeting at his home in Stockport on Saturday 3rd July 2004. Dennis will contact those members he feels most likely to make the trip, in due course, but if you would like to attend and haven't heard from him, just contact Dennis.

The informal meeting will begin at 11am with a relaxed stroll around the garden followed by a buffet lunch. It is then hoped that one or two members will give short talks on their favourite plants which will hopefully lead to a general discussion. In the past, the members who have attended these meetings have enjoyed a good day out.

Bring along any excess plants for swapping.

Dennis can be contacted on :
0161 483 4877
4 Highfield Road
Hazel Grove
Stockport SK7 6NS
adrowlinson@ntlworld.com



ASGAP Biennial Conference, Launceston, Tasmania. Jan 12-19 2004

By Tony Entwistle

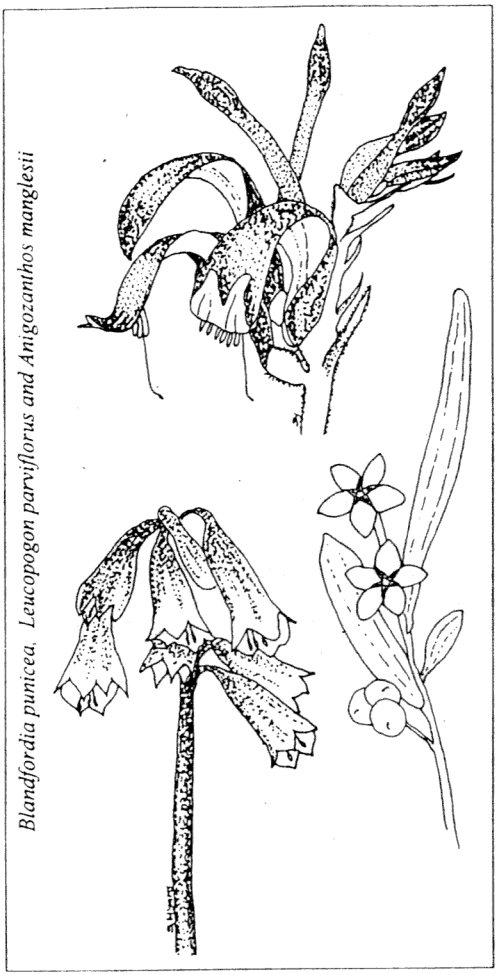
I attended this conference, the first for me, as I could combine it with a short stay with relatives nearby on the Tamar estuary.

I found it very interesting. As expected, most of the lectures were about Tasmania and its plants, and I have learned a lot about the geology, climate and Antarctica.

It was good to meet old friends from both Tasmania, Western Australia and Victoria, including Dick Burns, Gwen and Rodger Elliot among the speakers.

Fellow APS members Nicky Rose and Tony Parry (now a Swiss member) were also there.

I went on a pre-conference trip to the southeast of Tasmania, which I had seen little of before. In typically Tasmanian fashion, it was very hot and sunny on the coast, but snow and driving icy winds up in the Hartz mountains.



Blandfordia punicea, Leucopogon parviflorus and Anigozanthos manglesii

There were some lasting impressions on the trip - the huge old trees of Myrtle (*Notofagus cunninghamii)* and Dicksonias at Weldborough and Weilangta, the sheer height of *Eucalyptus regnans* and the trunks of the smaller *E. pulchella* and *tenuiramis*. On the Tasman peninsula I admired the stands of *Pimelea nivea* and *Leucopogon parviflorus* laden with white fruits. On the alpine heaths of the Hartz there was a great display of flowers, mostly white Bauera, completely prostrate, and dwarf Epacrids, with bright orange *Richea scoparia* and the iron-hard green mats of *Pterygopappus lawrencii*.

I have written previously about the splendid garden where I stayed on the Tamar estuary. This time, in high summer there, the spring display was over but there were still Grevilleas and *Ricinocarpus* in flower. *Corymbia ficifolia* was just starting; *Eucalyptus macrandra* was a mass of yellow, very effective framed against a large tree of *Acacia baileyana purpurea*. I was very impressed by the new red foliage of several *Angophora* species.

This was not an exclusively native garden and there was a splendid display of Penstemons, which obviously like the Tasmanian climate.

I did visit several all-native gardens and admired the display of *Anigozanthos*, dwarf brilliant blue cushions of *Scaevola* and *Dampiera*, and *Blandfordia punicea* grown in pots.

Identity crisis? Do we include S. America and S. Africa? What shall we call ourselves?

Tony Entwistle's article **'Beyond Australasia?'** in the December issue of Pentachondra has caused several members to voice their opinions.

The main points put forward by Tony were, should the Society expand to cover South Africa and/or South America, and if expansion was considered favourable what new name would the Society take? Tony also stated that since the APS is a specialist society, our current membership of around 200 is about right.

In another article, the question of an alternative name for the newsletter was mentioned.

The following letters reply to these issues.

A WORD FROM YOUR SECRETARY

I agree that the name *Pentachondra* is uninspired; the problem is finding a replacement. I feel that any name based on a genus, even one that's common to both Australia and New Zealand (Dianella, Leptospermum, Olearia...) could be misleading. *Down Under* would be totally cliché-ridden. I can only suggest something along the lines of *The Australasian Plant*: descriptive, though hardly likely to set the world alight.

I disagree with Tony about membership levels. I would feel far more confident about our society's future if our membership was in four figures. In that instance, there would be a much larger pool of people to draw on as possible committee members, and a much greater number of possible contributors to our newsletter. This brings me to the subject of expanding the society's field of interest to include South Africa and possibly South America as well. Initially, I was all in favour of the idea, but now I have my doubts. The point made in the December issue about the possible dilution of information is a very important one; I use my back numbers regularly as a reference tool. Were we to have a greatly expanded membership, then we should, in theory, have more contributors, so that we could have articles, on South Africans for instance, *in addition* to the current level of articles on Australasian plants, rather than replacing them. But unless our membership expands dramatically I now feel that we should remain strictly involved with Australasian plants only.

Einion Hughes

LET'S EXPAND!

Dear Editor

I write in response to Tony Entwistle's request in the November 2003 Newsletter of Pentachondra for views from members on expanding the society to include both South African and South American flora.

I am in favour of expansion because these two regions do include quite a large number of plants, similar to what can be found in Australia and New Zealand, like members of the Proteaceae (ie. Lomatia, Gevuina and Embothrium in S. America and of course, Proteas, Leucodendron and Leucospermum in South Africa). In fact I understand that there is an extensive cut-flower industry in both Australia and New Zealand for Leucodendrons and Leucospermums, accompanied by the breeding of new varieties of them, which, I am sure we all would like to know about.

As for a new name for the newsletter, how about some variation on Gondwanaland, which is the name of the land mass to which these countries all belonged in the not so distant past.

Besides Australasian, I do have an interest in both S. African and S. American flora and full expansion would benefit existing members, as well as potential new ones.

Stuart Fraser, Portland, Oregon

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'A CHANGE OF IDENTITY'

Dear Editor

I see entirely what Tony Entwistle means about his own position on this vexed issue. I suspect that a majority of members share his feeling that Australian plants should be the main focus.

I suspect that a not inconsiderable minority might feel the same about New Zealand ones. (Though rather more of that group of enthusiasts may nowadays perhaps be found as members of the Hebe Society, which I understand has sensibly enough more and more permitted itself to deal with just about any plant from New Zealand which takes its fancy.)

And then there are the few, I suspect the very few (at least within this society), who like myself are not fundamentally interested in where a plant comes from - except insofar as its place of origin affects their real concern, which is how a plant performs here. That is, I'm interested in plants which are striking, unusual, possibly on the edges of hardiness, and possibly pose a challenge to cultivate successfully in British conditions. If the plant has those qualities I really don't care if it comes from Australia, New Zealand, South America, South Africa, the Far East or the Mediterranean.

Since I'm less and less interested in artificially protecting plants in the ground or in growing under glass, the result in practice is that in my mild but moist and heavy-soiled West Coast garden I grow steadily fewer plants from Australia and South Africa. On

the other hand, I grow steadily more from New Zealand - and increasing numbers from the Himalayas and, particularly, from Chile and its neighbours. I'd very much like to grow more South American shrubs, if only I could find a source of relevant plants or seed. And I very much wish the UK had SAPS (an unfortunate acronym for that delightful non-event, the South American Plant Society).

And, no, of course I don't expect the APS suddenly to throw its doors wide-open to all those scattered 'points of origin'. I mention my own position on this merely to show that for some members the question of geography is, indeed, 'beside the point'. I'm in the Australasian Plant Society because it deals with plants which are interesting, not because they're plants which are Australasian.

And now the question of names, not of plants but of newsletters, magazines or journals. Yes, agreed, *Pentachondra* as a name is wilfully obscure. If it's to be a genus name, why *Pentachondra* rather than the name of a genus which at least most people recognise, and recognise as Australasian? *Eucalyptus* or *Callistemon* or *Olearia* or *Pittosporum*, say. Why not a name which is in English rather than in botanical Latin? Not quite *The Gum-Tree*, perhaps, let alone *Up A Gum-Tree*, but...! Indeed, why not a name which rather than relating to a specific genus relates to the whole field with which we're concerned?

Why not, supposing our intention is to attract members rather than to bewilder them and put them off, a name which is eye- and attention-catching rather than merely mystifying? The Half Hardy Group of the HPS, for example, calls its journal *Borderlines* a name which is short, sharp, to the point, and suggests what the group is concerned with. Surely we can come up with something at least as effective. Offers?

Tim Longville

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BEYOND AUSTRALASIA

Dear Editor

I respond to comments posed in the last issue

Points Arising:
Australian plants are, generally speaking, so ill-fitted for inclusion in most gardens in Britain that their presence could reasonably be described as an anachronism.

For some people that is their appeal - there always have been, and always will be, gardeners who take delight in growing difficult or demanding plants.

For the majority of people, including many keen gardeners, it is a turn off. They already have enough trouble achieving the results they want with reliable, easily grown plants, and are not interested in those they find hard to please.

The implications if this situation are fundamentally significant to any proposal to extend the interests of the society.

Tony Entwistle is absolutely right in asserting that it is an important matter on which the whole membership should be involved in any decision.

If the society remains exclusively committed to Australasian plants it will:

- Remain a small and select band.
- Continue to be closely focussed and correspondingly useful as a source of information and expertise.
- Run the risk of proving to be unsustainable; since, sooner or later, a dip in interest with a small, narrowly based membership will make it impossible to find the officers necessary to run it.

If it opts to be more inclusive - for example, by extending its interests to plants of the Temperate Southern Hemisphere* in general, it will:

- Increase its membership.
- Develop broader interests - notably in bulbs, annuals and succulent plants, which are barely or inadequately represented in the floras of Australia and New Zealand - but perhaps lack the specialist knowledge to contribute effectively to our understanding of these plants.
- Gain greater protection from failure due to lack of support.

*it seems to be assumed that expansion within the Southern Hemisphere would be the way to go (assuming a will to go), but there is no over-riding logic in that. The most significant common connection is with Gondwana but the contribution of that continent to the composition of the floras of Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and South America varies greatly, and India also shares the connection - not to mention Madagascar!

It would be just as logical or illogical for the Society to extend its interests to the plants of the countries bordering the Pacific Ocean. At least the Pacific Plant Society would create no problems, but that does not mean it would be a good idea.

My feeling is that the proposal to expand the interests of the society owes more to the nebulous attractions of making a change than the need to make a change. It should be considered only if:

- There is strong and determined support for the idea.
- The possibility of rapid development to a much larger society with vastly broader interests is recognised and welcomed.
- The Society's officers are sure they are prepared to cope with the burden of extra responsibilities that a more popular, broadly based character with more diverse interests would bring with it.
- And provided there is some kind of horticultural logic behind the extension.

Tony has drawn attention to the difficulty of finding a name for the society if its interests were extended to other parts of the Southern Hemisphere. That difficulty alone suggests that the plants of these countries do not share enough in common to provide a suitable foundation for a coherent society. If that is so, the likelihood of fragmentation into different interest groups would be high.

Peter Thompson

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BEYOND AUSTRALASIA? NO!

Dear Editor,

Beyond Australasia? No - stick with Oz and NZ. I grow as many South African plants as I can (SABS helps) and am intrigued by South American ones - and there is little help there, but

it is better to stick with a limited area where expertise is available to share. Re: newsletter name. 'Pentachondra' is not compelling. My suggestion would be 'eucalypt' perhaps (all letters small case, meaning 'well covered' to indicate aspirations-free group.

Rob Senior

****

BEYOND AUSTRALASIA? YES!

Dear Editor

Concerning the expansion of the APS, South Africa must be included but that would mean a change of name. Keeping it simple, what about 'Australasia & Beyond'. Then members would be able to inform other members about visits etc and keep it under one 'umbrella'. The 'Beyond' label would enable the society to expand without changing its name in future years.

Tony Entwistle said that our membership of 200 was about right because we are a specialised society. The British Fuchsia Society has a conservative membership of over 7000 members and they are also a specialised society. Others include dahlia, cactus and chrysanthemum societies which would have folded if the membership fell as low as ours. We must do better.

John Canney

1. Pentachondra?

Dear Editor

I must say that I've never understood why the name of our newsletter became "Pentachondra". I have some knowledge of Australian plants, but had never heard of it. It strikes me as not only the wrong name for our newsletter, but also the wrong type of name.

To anyone with little knowledge of botanical names "Pentachondra" will be meaningless (even to those with some knowledge, it may be meaningless - see above!). And if you knew what "Pentachondra" represented, you would, I believe, be expecting a publication dedicated to it. So it puts the novice off, and annoys the expert.

What, then, should it become? From Tony Entwistle's experience at the Tatton show, "Australasian" was not understood by many. It's an odd name, anyway, and really means "South Asian", so I'm not surprised it is confusing.

Devising a name is not that easy. When I had to invent a domain name for our website, I had to do a bit of headscratching. Fortunately, I could use the internet engines to search and see if the names I thought of had been previously used or registered. In the end, "Anzplantsoc" seemed acceptable. It didn't exactly roll off the tongue (and it wasn't as bad as

"Australplantsoc"...), but it was accurate. It reflected what our society was interested in, and I hoped that most of those who came across the name by accident would understand what "Anz" was.

As we already have an internet name, why not keep a similar name for the newsletter? Why not just "Anzplants" - the newsletter of the Australian and New Zealand Plant Society? And, yes, I have changed the Society name, too! Maybe it is time to revise both.

2. Beyond Australasia?

No.

Although I have almost no interest in New Zealand plants (small, white, scentless flowers seems to cover most of them. They are Bore-al rather than Austral...), I had no particular objection to including them in our Society's realm of interest. It even allowed us to include the flora of some of the interesting outlying islands such as Chatham Island.

I have far more interest in South African and southern South American plants, and grow quite a few of them. But the extraordinary range of the Australasian flora is enough for one society. We don't need to triple the number of plants the Society covers. We cannot, and should not, try to cover everything. On a relative basis, do we really want a 150-page Newsletter, or the current one appearing bimonthly? Sue Hyams does a great job with the Newsletter, but I doubt she would like that increase in work!

It is true that there is some similarity between Australian and South African plants, but that does not extend to South America. If we covered all the flora of those continents, how long would it be before separate groups appeared, specialising in certain areas (like the Australian Plant Society study groups)? We have a small but enthusiastic society at present; maybe it could stand a few more members, but not the sort of number that adding two continental floras would bring.

Jeff Layman

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The last word?

Dear Editor

I see no reason to change the name of Pentachondra, its unique and I like it as it is. Neither do I wish to have coloured pictures in it. I like it fine just the way it it.

Dr. Helen Beaufort-Murphy

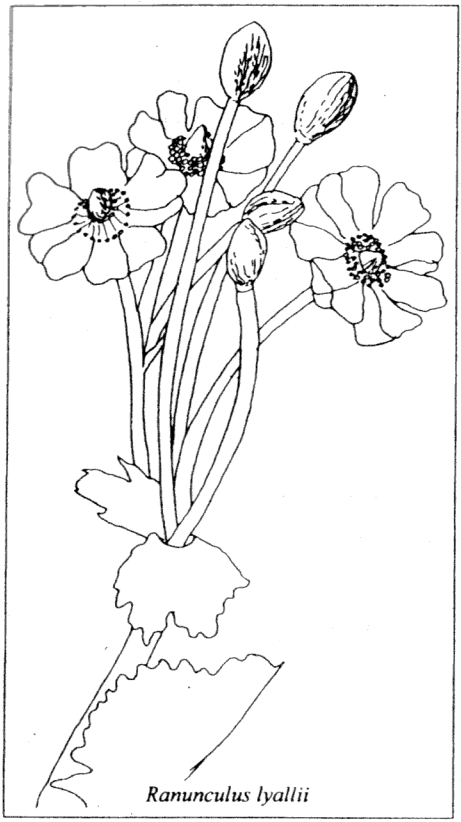
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If other members would like to express their views, please do so for the next issue. The more comments and opinions we have, the better. Its not possible to please everyone, but we'll try our best.

Sue

Germinating New Zealand Buttercups

Brian Halliwell



Ranunculus lyallii

Of perhaps 40 species of *Ranunculus* native to New Zealand, those from the mountains are most desirable to gardeners. Many are difficult of cultivation, and are for the specialist grower. Anyone who rises to the challenge of trying to grow them will have to start with seed. A few species are offered in the seed exchanges of: APS, Alpine Garden Society, Scottish Rock Garden Club, American Rock Garden Society and perhaps a few others in the Northern Hemisphere. To obtain the largest number of species, a gardener will have to become a member of the New Zealand Alpine Garden Society.

The first difficulty is to germinate the seed. It is not so much a difficulty as a lack of patience. When going through pots a year after sowing, where there is no germination, pots are discarded. All seeds of New Zealand *Ranunculus* species take at least two years to germinate so no container should be discarded under 3 years.

On receipt of the seed sow in containers on the surface of a gritty well drained lime free, soil based compost. Take a quantity of dry coarse sand or fine gravel and sieve out the dust and fine particles. Lightly scatter the coarser material over the seed allowing most to be visible between the grains. Ensure that when labelling, an ink is chosen which does not fade. In my experience many of the inks which are described as permanent and non fading are not so and after 3 years are illegible. Indian ink is reliable and so are some of those which are alcohol

based. Rather than gamble on an unknown ink use pencil, and press on it as one writes so that the name is scored into the label. Plunge containers after watering outside up to their rim where they can be exposed to winter cold. Covering the plunged pots with netting will prevent birds from scratching in the pots or pulling out labels. After sowing, water whenever necessary and pull out any seedling weeds. In my experience, following germination after 2 years, seedlings can appear in subsequent years and I remember one pot of *R. crithmifolius ssp. paucifolius* still producing seedlings 10 years after sowing.

Germination seems to speed up if packets of seed are put into waterproof containers in a domestic refrigerator for at least a month prior to sowing. When one has been successful in bringing a species to flower and seed is produced, this should be sown when the seed is fully mature but green. Green seed will often germinate in one year instead of two.

This is an updated article which first appeared in Issue 13 of Pentachondra

Treasurer's Report on 2003

As expected, costs exceeded income and it was necessary to dip a little into our reserves.

This was largely due to the expense of the Five Year Index, which will not recur for some time! The cost of our stand at the RHS show at Tatton was nothing (a tiny profit), thanks to the £65 we received for our bronze award. In terms of cost-effectiveness, we only recruited one new member!, which is very disappointing as over 50 hours of unpaid work was done by local members before, during and after the show.

I would point out that we are a declining, albeit slowly, society. Current membership (March 04) is under 160, and we did peak at 210 some years ago. We had 12 new members in 2003, more than average, but not enough to compensate the annual 'fall-out' of around 20, who do not renew their subscriptions despite reminder, and about 50% of new members drop out after 1-2 years - I wonder what they expected? So please try and recruit some new members this year.

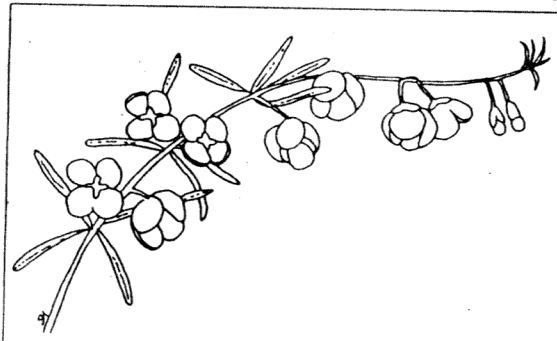
NOTES FROM AMERICA # 2

Helen Beaufort-Murphy

"Notes from America #1" (December 2001) covered the renovation of my house and garden in St. Buryan, Cornwall. This included soil preparation and hardscaping the garden area with: a small pond; bog area; low damp bed; raised fairly dry bed; and terraced alpine bed with screes. As well as Material and Methods for seed germination and potting; and the use of Potassium Permanganate for the control of algae, molds and Black Gnats. This article covers some of my experience with seed germination and plant survival of Australasian species in St. Buryan.

Prefixes: FS = raised from seeds; PP = purchased plant; GP = gift plant; SS = seeds but no germination or seedlings died.
Seed/plant sources: AP=Australasian Plant Society; BC=Burncoose; CD=Caddicks Clematis; BC=Beth Chatto; CC=Collectors Corner; CS=Chilterns Seeds; LG=Lanhydrock Gardens; LK=Lower Kenneggy; MW=Marwood; PM=Potterton and Martin; TC=Trevena Cross.

Trees and Shrubs	f.colour	height	source	notes
FS. *Acacia longifolia*	yellow	2-10m	CS	prefers moist situation
FS. *Acacia pravissima*	yellow	5m	AP	weeping habit
FS. *Acacia pycnantha*	yellow	8m	CS	large sickle shaped phyllodes
FS. *Acacia retinodes*	yellow	5m	CS	long thin phyllodes
FS. *Acacia riceana*	yellow	5m	AP	pine needle shaped phyllodes
FS. *Acacia vestita*	yellow	4m	AP	weeping habit, gray hairy phyllodes
SS. *Boronia pinnata*	pink	2m	AP	spicy aroma, prefers moist situation
SS. *Boronia megastigma*	brown	1.5m	AP	beautifully scented flowers



Boronia megastigma

Brown or Sweet-Scented Boronia

The highly scented cup-shaped flowers of this wiry-branched shrub are dark brown to yellow-green outside and yellow-green inside.

FS. *Callistemon salignus*		2-6m	AP	will stand a damp situation
PP. *Corokia cotoneaster*	yellow	2m	PM	fascinating angled branches
PP. *Correa alba*	white		MW	prolific flowers, rapid grower
PP. *Correa reflexa*	red	prostrate	PM	flowers all winter. Slow grower.
SS. *Eremophila maculata*	rust		CS	tender. Can take 10 years to flower

FS. *Hakea bucculenta*	orange/red		CS	bushy shrub, prolific flowers.
PP. *Hakea laurina*	pink		TC	Pin Cushion Hakea, small tree
FS. *Hakea saligna*	white		AP	needs well drained location
PP. *Hebe buxifolia*	white	prostate	PM	New Zealand
PP. *Hebe lycopodioides*	white	prostate	PM	New Zealand
PP. *Hoheria lyallii*	white		BC	New Zealand, fabulous flowers
FS. *Kunzea ambigua*	white	4-5m	AP	honey scented, feathery flowers
FS. *Kunzea baxteri*	red	3m	AP	brilliant red silky bottlebrush fls.
FS. *Kunzea parvifolia*	mauve	4-5m	AP	feathery bottlebrush flowers
FS. *Leptospermum citratum*	white	3m	AP	full sun
FS. *Leptospermum nicholsii*	red/pink	2-3m	CS	full sun
FS. *Melaleuca linarifolia*	white	5m	AP	full sun, moist, prolific flowers
FS. *Melaleuca squarrosa*	yellow	3m	AP	full sun, moist.
SS. *Metrosideros tomentosus*	red		AP	New Zealand's Christmas tree
PP. *Pimelea prostrata*	white	prostrate	PM	New Zealand. Alpine bed
PP. *Raoulia australis*	yellow	prostrate	PM	alpine mat, perfect for scree
SS. *Sollya heterophylla*	blue		AP	lovely blue flowers.



Crotillaria cunninghamii
Green Bird Flower

Flowers are yellow-green streaked with fine purple lines, pea-shaped, 3-6cm long with an ovate pointed standard petal and long twisted keel, arranged in terminal racemes upto 25cm long. Widespread on sandy soils inland in Qld, NSW, SA, WA and NT.

Vines: excellent for containers, protect in frost-free location in winter.

SS. *Crotillaria cunninghamii*
Green climbing AP
Green Bird vine

SS. *Hardenbergia comptoniana*
Purple climbing AP
Australian Wisteria

SS. *Hardenbergia violacea*
Purple climbing AP
Australian Wisteria

SS. *Pandora dorotoxylon*
Yellow/white AP
Cream bells with brown marks

Perennials

PP. *Clematis Lunar Lass*
White prostate PM
Mat of feathery leaves, alpine bed

PP. *Helichrysum bracheatum*
Yellow 1m MW
Dargon Hill Monarch, fabulous.

PP. *Pelargonium australis*
Pink prostrate PM
Flowered for months, alpine bed

PP. *Pratia pedunculata*	blue	prostrate	LK	v. County Park fl. Spring/fall, damp.
PP. *Pratia pedunculata*	white	prostrate	MW	v. Tom Stone fl. spring/fall damp bed

Annuals

SS. *Actinotus helianthus*	white	1m	AP	Flannel Flower, white wooly flowers
GP. *Helichrysum adenophorum*			AP	var. *waddelliae*.

Summary of methods and results of seed germination, plant growth and flowering.

Six species of *Acacia*: Seeds placed in small containers, covered with boiling water, left to cool and soak overnight, sown next morning. First sowing: good germination with all species but all seedlings died from fungal contamination and/or gnat grubs. Second sowing: with Potassium Permanganate (PP hereafter) drench, good germination with all species, healthy growth following potting and planting out in the garden.

Crotillaria cunninghamii and 2 species of *Hardenbergia*: First sowing: Seeds sanded lightly between 2 pieces of #200 sandpaper, soaked overnight, sown next morning. Good germination but all seedlings died from fungal contamination or gnat grubs. No seeds left for second sowing.

Hakea laurina - commonly called the Pincushion Hakea because the bright red flowers with protruding cream styles form globular pincushion-like flowerheads.

Two species of *Hakea*. Seeds of *Hakea saligna* sown without pretreatment, with PP drench on potting mix. Good germination and plant growth after potting and planting seedlings in the garden. Purchased plant of *Hakea laurina* grew vigorously following planting out.

Two species of *Hebe*. Purchased plants of *H. buxifolia* and *H. lycopodioides* grew very well in the alpine bed.

Hoheria lyallii. A purchased plant, it grew rapidly and flowered. Native habitat: edges of forests and streams. Hardy to 15°C.

Three species of *Kunzea*: No pretreatment of seeds. First sowing: good germination, but all the seedlings died. Second sowing, with PP drench, excellent germination and growth, plants of *K. ambigua* flowered when one year old in 6inch pots, but became yellow and died after being planted out in the garden, some sooner than others. Apparently the soil was not suitable for them.

Species of *Callistemon, Leptospermum and Melaleuca*. No pretreatment of seeds. As with above species all seedlings died from first sowing. Second sowing (with PP drench) good germination and seedlings and young plants grew well following planting in the garden.

Two species of *Correa*. The purchased plants of *C. alba* and *C. reflexa* grew extremely well in the garden and flowered all winter.

Corokia cotoneaster. Purchased plant grew very well indeed in the garden.

Metrosideros tomentosus. Only had a few seeds, no pretreatment and only one sowing, good germination but all seedlings died.

Raoulia australis. Purchased plant grew well and soon made an attractive mat in the scree.

Pimelea prostrata. Purchased plant. Grew very well in the alpine bed.

*Clematis 'Luna Lass*l. Purchased plant. Soon made an attractive, small lacy mat in alpine bed.

Two species of *Helichrysum. H. bracheatum 'Dargan Hill Monarch'*. Small purchased plant made a magnificent display (1m across) and flowered for months. Seedlings of *H. adenophorum* var. *waddelliae*, from APS, grew well all summer but died with first frost. Is it normally this tender?

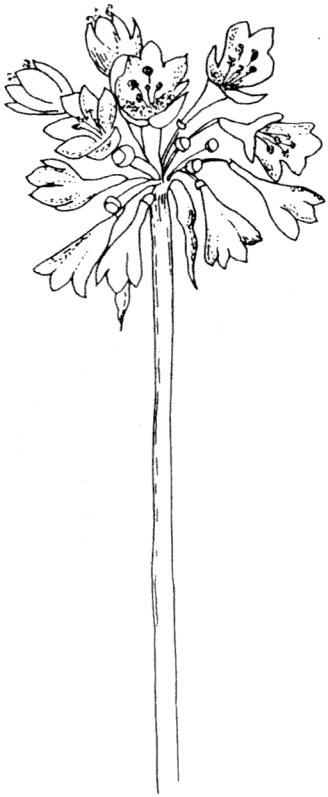
Pelargonium australis. Purchased plant grew well and flowered for months, I noticed several small self sown seedlings in the alpine bed before I left St. Buryan.

Two varieties of *Pratia pedunculata*. Purchased plants of *P. pedunculata* v. 'County Park' and 'Tom Stone' made lovely lacy mats in the damp bed and flowered from spring until fall.

Actinotus helianthus. Good germination but seedlings of first sowing died as with other species.

In addition to the above-mentioned Australasian species, by the time I left St. Buryan I had planted several dozen other plants (many from other parts of the Southern Hemisphere). Including small trees, shrubs, vines, bamboos, perennials and aquatics. And, according to the current owners of the house, the majority of them are growing very well. Just before I left I gave a large potted plant of *Acacia pycnantha* to a friend in St. Buryan, which he planted in his garden. It's going to flower for the first time this year and I'm looking forward to a photo of the occasion.

When I left St. Buryan I swore I would never renovate another house. But I bought an abandoned house about 2 years ago that was an absolute wreck. And the renovations to the house and basic hardscaping to the garden were only



Calostemma purpureum

finished a few weeks ago. Consequently, it is only during the last few days that I've been able to get my small greenhouse (8 x8ft) ready so that I can start sowing seeds (including many Australasian species) as soon as the weather warms up a bit. Meanwhile I am looking forward to the day when the bulb of *Calostemma purpureum* that Jeff Irons sent me decides to flower. The winters in this part of North Carolina are long and cold, and often get to minus 20 degrees Centigrade. So most Australasian plants will have to be grown in containers and kept in a frost-free place each winter. If any of the APS members can suggest any species that might survive outdoors here I would appreciate hearing from them.

Calostemma purpureus is an Australian bulbous herbaceous plant belonging to the family Amaryllidaceae. Commonly known as the Garland Lily or Purple Bells, its dark green leaves can reach 40cm in length. Clusters of pink to reddish-purple trumpet-shaped flowers bloom atop upright stems, themselves upto 60cm in height.

The property consists of a detached bungalow (built in 1980) in the middle of a 100x200ft lot. The lot was completely bare and unfenced when I bought the property. So far I have had a fence installed around the boundary and had some beds cultivated across the front of the house and I am looking forward to landscaping the garden. About 1½ years ago I purchased some 2 dozen small trees and shrubs (on sale), which are currently in large tubs and have grown quite big. So I'm looking forward to getting them planted as soon as I can find someone to do it.

To be continued when I have some progress to report on my plants and new garden.

DUMPLINGS

When walking through the forest on the basalt cap of Mount Wilson, in New South Wales' Blue Mountains I have often come across a small trailing plant with pale yellow bell shaped flowers. My guide books say that it is *Billardiera scandens*, commonly known as Dumplings. Never having come across fruit, I have not tried to grow it. A couple of years ago Liesbeth Uitjevaal de Vries gave me a potted specimen. Since books describe it as a slender climber, up to 5m in height, the plant was put in my garden, at the base of a *Daphne bholua*. Now it spreads across the ground, and has begun to go up into the Daphne. The flowers are very different from those I have seen in the Blue Mountains. They are a pale apple green and more slender, with a prominent flaring out at the mouth of the bell. Although attractive, their green colour makes them less showy than those of the Blue Mountains forms. The long lasting fruits are pale green, sometimes flushed with the red or purple that gives rise to the other common name of Apple Berry.

This small plant would make an attractive addition to a garden, or in colder areas, a cool greenhouse. Propagation is from seed or cuttings.

Jeff Irons

Beware Solanum

After reading Tony Entwistle's article 'Tresco Again' in the last newsletter, in which Tony writes that the orange fruits of *Solanum aviculare* are poisonous and are removed from the plants, **Rob Senior**, a Cornish member, has been prompted to ask "Are the berries of *Solanum aviculare* very poisonous?"

Jeff Irons provides the following information in response.

"The name 'aviculare' is a reference to the fact that birds eat the fruits, obviously they do not suffer any harm. The ripe fruits are perfectly harmless both to birds and people. The unripe fruits of both *Solanum aviculare* and *S. laciniatum* contain the alkaloid solasodine. Obviously it is better to be safe than sorry where children are concerned and it seems sensible to ban the eating of all fruits. That avoids any danger from eating partly ripe fruits."

Traditionally aborigines feasted on the fruits only when they were fully ripe. Today's interest in bush tucker foods has resulted in recipes which use the fruits to make chutneys and relishes as well as drying them to use as a substitute for sun-dried tomatoes.

STILL ON THE SUBJECT OF SOLANUMS....

Tim Longville, of Maryport, Cumbria, writes the following about his allergic reaction to a solanum, not an Australasian one, but as he says "what one solanum can do, presumably most if not all others can".

"In early summer 2002, my *Solanum crispum* 'Glasnevin' and the *Sophora tetraptera* with which it was sharing a stretch of south-facing wall were wrenched away from their wires by one of our regular seaside gales. The two plants had grown so inextricably entangled - and the solanum in particular had got itself so arthritically clenched around its host - that re-anchoring them wasn't easy. What I ended up doing was perching on top of a ladder and, after I'd separated them, pinning sections of the solanum out of the way with a leg while using my hands to do any necessary pruning and then to re-tie the main sections of the sophora. Having got that far, I then did the same sort of job on the solanum alone: holding one section out of the way with a leg while tieing in another with my hands. And so on...

Inevitably, in the course of all that, my wrists and arms, as well as my thighs and lower legs, were in pretty regular and violent contact with parts of the solanum. On the other hand, I was wearing a pair of thick working jeans and a heavy woollen working shirt with the sleeves rolled down. Despite this protection and despite the fact that I had simply come into contact with the bark not the sap, within 24 hours much of the insides of my arms and wrists and the fronts of my thighs and calves had come up in lurid red welts. My nearest and dearest suggested cheerfully that I looked like the victim of a rawhide-whipping in a Clint Eastwood spaghetti western. And then the worst of those red welts turned into a series of ping-pong ball-sized blisters. Needless to say, all of the affected areas (but particularly the blistered ones) burned and itched like crazy. Six months later the worse affected areas were still visible as darkish-red-brown surface scars. So, beware, beware....."

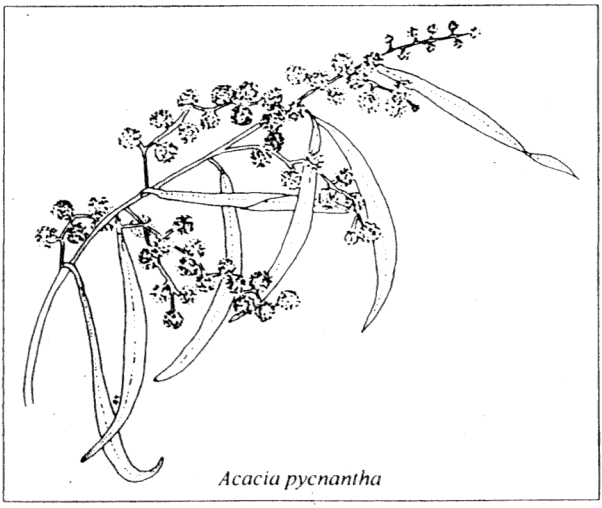
Kew in February

On 29 February I travelled by rail to London in order to visit Kew Gardens. The 'Tube' trip from Kings Cross to Kew Gardens passed several acacias in gardens, in full bloom - a wonderful sight with all those yellow pompons. On the short walk from the 'Tube' station to the Gardens, I passed a garden where a tree fern was happily growing. What a different climate to that back home in Yorkshire!

From 14 February to 14 March it was the 10th Annual Orchid Festival at Kew Gardens. Over a quarter of a million orchid flowers decorated the Princess of Wales Conservatory. Metal greenhouse supports were clad with orchids attached to bark, *Vanda* sp, growing in wooden slatted baskets, hung from a series of metal arches creating a tunnel of colour, and other orchids were displayed on tree branches giving them a more natural setting. Orchids are a group of plants in which I have become increasingly interested over the past couple of years, partly due to an enthusiastic work colleague who belongs to the local orchid society and partly due to an orchid show held at the garden centre where I had the chance to talk to two orchid dealers who introduced me to some Australian species. I am now on the lookout for more Australians to add to my, as yet, small collection.

Its many years since I last visited Kew. So long in fact that when last there, there was an 'Australian House'. Now this building is the 'Evolution House.' After thinking that Australia had been abandoned, I eventually discovered its representatives growing at the back of the Temperate House, the building housing the flora of South Africa and South America, as well as that of New Zealand. Some of the plants were not of the best quality - maybe that's why they had been relegated to the back!

One of my favourite plants is the Black Boy or Grass Tree, *Xanthorrhoea australis*, and at Kew there is a small colony of them. Its one of those plants seen on illustrated records of James Cook's voyages to the Great Southern Land.



Acacia pycnantha

Various acacias were in bloom notably *A. boormanii* with narrow leaves and perfumed lemon-yellow pompons. *A. vestita* and *A. pycnantha* were also both in flower

Chorizema varium, a low spreading plant about 30cm in height, was covered with

vermillion pea-like flowers. More pea-like flowers, this time red, decorated the greyish foliage of *Brachysema celsianum*. *Kennedya macrophylla* was also showing a few red pea-like flowers.

A 2m tall specimen of *Banksia serrata*, looking a bit chlorotic, had the remains of last year's flowers. An attractive foliage shrub was *Regelia* (species unknown). The foliage is grey and hairy. Another plant with grey foliage was *Cassia helmsii* from SA. Yet another grey-leaved plant was the woody shrub *Eremophila nivea* from WA. The grey leaves curl in on themselves to resemble needles.

From Western Australia there was a specimen of *Adenanthos sericea*, an upright conifer-like tree. A 6m tall Hoop Pine, *Araucaria cunninghamii* made an impressive sight with the added interest of having shiny bark reminiscent of that of *Prunus serrula*.

Although there were several clumps of kangaroo paws (and some labels pushed in the soil next to invisible plants!), one paw was in bloom. *Anigozanthos* (*A. bicolor* x *A. humilis*) x *A. flavidus* had flower stalks over 60cm in height with greenish flowers.

A 1.5m specimen of *Isopogon dawsonii* from SE Australia was covered in developing flower buds with just a few opening. Various honeymyrtles were represented - *Melaleuca squarrosa* at 2m tall and *M. hypericifolia* at a similar height. Bottlebrushes featured both inside and outside the glasshouse.

Villarsia calthifolia from WA has foliage similar to *Caltha palustris* but with stems upto 45cm long.



Santalum acuminatum

There was a specimen of *Santalum acuminatum* from WA, the Quandong, previously written about in a past issue as a food product.

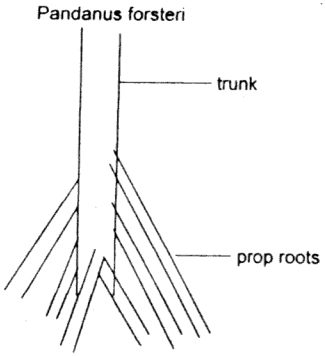
Grevillea rosmarinifolia had just a smattering of pinky-red flowers. Another grevillea was *G. ornithopoda* with foliage looking like a smaller version of that of *G. robusta*.

A large shrub of *Pittosporum undulatum*, SA, was in full bloom - fragrant creamy flowers with yellow stamens.

Plants of *Dendrobium speciosum*, with their creamy-white fragrant flowers edged the border.

A plant that resembles a smaller version of *Bursaria spinosa*, is *Citriobatus pauciflorus*, native to Qld and NSW. The stems are prickly just like the Australian blackthorn. The leaves are small. The tiny cream flowers have 5 petals.

From NZ were several plants of *Coprosma repens* commonly known as the Looking Glass Plant because of the shape of the leaves - just like a looking glass. These plants all had an upright habit of 2m in height.



Another upright NZ plant was *Sophora prostrata* with tiny leaves. Also from NZ, with an incredibly straight trunk was *Vitex lutens* from NZ. The leaves are large and leathery, reminiscent of a camellia.

From the Chatham Islands there was *Olearia traversii*; from Lord Howe Island, *Metrosideros nervulosa*, and *Howea fosteriana*, a member of the Palm family, still carrying fruit from a previous flowering. Also from Lord Howe Island was *Pandanus forsteri*, a palm-like tree with numerous prop roots around the base of the trunk.

From NZ was a 5m tall *Dacrydium cupressinum* (Rimu) - a coniferous tree with pendent branches. Also from NZ was a 2m tall *Metrosideros carminea*, tied to a metal pillar for support.

So, although the main intention of the visit was to see the hundreds of orchids, I also saw many Australasian plants. Unfortunately it was obviously a bit early in the season to see many of them in flower.

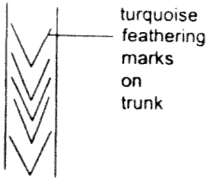
Dundee in March

March 24th 2004

Almost a month after visiting Kew Gardens, I travelled northwards, to Dundee, again by train (book your ticket well in advance and get a good cheap deal!) From the station it was straight to the University of Dundee Botanic Garden. Located in 9.5 hectares of south facing and gently sloping land near the banks of the River Tay, a wide range of plants can be enjoyed. Plants are loosely grouped on a geographical basis. As well as British native plants there are collections from the Mediterranean, Australasia, and Asia.

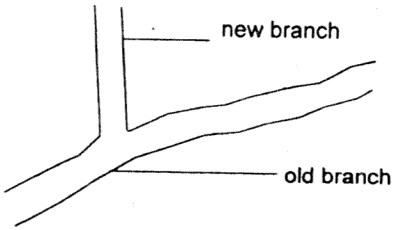
The main colour at the time of my visit was from the first of the rhododendrons and camellias, *Cornus mas* and forsythias. Several magnolias were just waiting to burst into bloom.

There is a large collection of eucalypts, mainly planted in two small copses where it makes it easy to compare leaf colour (almost turquoise through to olive green), shape (linear through to cordate) and size, as well as bark colour (chestnut-brown stringybark to 'camouflage-effect' in green and brown patches, as well as turquoise feathering marks).



Some of the trees were about 12m tall. Many were multi-stemmed.

Species of eucalypts at Dundee include:
coccifera
dalrympleana
debeuzevillei
delegatensis
glaucescens
gunnii
kybeanensis
mitchelliana
neglecta
nitens
parvifolia
pauciflora ssp *niphophila*
perriniana
stellulata.
subcrenulata
urnigera

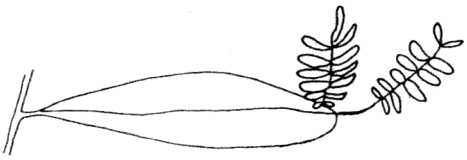


Beneath the eucalypts are centimetres of leaf litter and ribbons of peeling bark. Many of the trunks are growing at an acute angle from which new branches are developing and shooting vertically.

Southern Beech trees are represented by *Nothofagus menziesii, cunninghamii* and *solandri* var. *cliffortoides.*

Daisy bushes are represented by *Olearia nummularifolia, zennorensis,* x *haastii,* and *paniculata* (with stringy, peeling bark, wavy-edged olive green leaves, 3-4cm long, with white undersides). I noticed a couple of pittosporums : *P. patulum* and *P. tenuifolium* 'Silver Queen.'

There are several specimens of *Callistemon sieberi*, all growing in a prostrate manner having split the main stems at the base at some time. The bushes now have an individual spread of 3m. Other bottlebrushes featured are *Callistemon salignus* var *viridiflorus*, and in the glasshouse, already in flower, is *Callistemon citrinus* 'Splendens'.



Acacia melanoxylon

Some species of acacia, including *Acacia melanoxylon*, revert to juvenile foliage whenever they are damaged in any way. The phyllodes of the glasshouse specimen had fern-like leaves sprouting from the tips.

Amongst many other plants in the glasshouse are *Brachychiton bidwillii, Banksia ashbyi, B. integrifolia, Xanthorrhoea preisii, Acacia melanoxylon* (with two types of foliage - phyllodes and feathery), *Acacia longifolia, Hakea gibbosa, Anigozanthos flavidus* (in bloom), two 2m tall specimens of the NZ shrub/tree *Elingamita johnsonii, Blechnum penna-marina* (used as groundcover), *Xeronema callistemon* (just starting the flower, revealing a reddish tinge), *Dendrobium kingianum, D. kingianum* var. *silcockii,* two large *Dicksonia antarctica* with 2m tall trunks upon which Hare's foot ferns (*Davallia* sp) happily grow,

Platycerium sp. *Restio tetraphyllus, Correa backhousiana, Drosera binata* (forked sundew from Australia), and *Drosera dichotoma.*



Banksia ashbyi - orange banksia

Growing outside against the glasshouse wall is *Leptospermum pubescens* still carrying lots of old seedheads. Also outside is *L. lanigerum* var. *lanigerum,* now 1.5m x 1.5m.

Other Australasians happily thriving outside are : *Aristotelia serrata* (6m x 6m), *Griselinia littoralis, Senecio elaeagnifolius, Bulbinella hookeri* (just 15cm tall as fresh foliage pushes through the leaf litter), *Corokia cotoneaster, Brachyglottis monroi, Phormium tenax* and *Ozothamnus rosmarinifolius.*

News from members

Dennis Rowlinson, of Stockport, has been spending his money again! A visit to Graham Hutchins' nursery in Hornchurch last autumn resulted in the purchase of five correas : *C.* 'Dusky Bells', 'Ivory', 'Pinkie', 'Mary' and 'Inglewood Gold'. As they were quite large plants, Dennis has already taken cuttings. Other correas grown by Dennis are *C. alba, C. backhousiana* and *C.* 'Marion's Marvel'; all three flowering away in the garden in late December. Also blooming at the same time was *Grevillea lanigera.*

Other purchases made, from Hythe Alpines, were *Clematis* 'Nunn's Pride' - a small trailing NZ hybrid and *C. heraclefolia* 'Cassandra' - herbaceous and very neat.

Margaret Crawley, of Birmingham, writes:-

There are sometimes queries as to what may prove to be really hardy plants, so the following notes may be of interest. I should add that I have only a very tiny garden (overshadowed by a large eucalyptus which should never have been allowed to grow to this size - we, and the birds, love it), and have chosen some Australian plants simply because I liked what I found in our local nurseries.

We brought *Pittosporum* Tom Thumb' from our previous garden in Birmingham where it had been planted in the rock garden, got too big, put into a large pot, and then moved with us to our present garden and again planted out. It has withstood everything I and the weather have thrown at it.

We planted a kunzea in the garden 5 years ago, and it flowers every year. We bought *Correa* 'Dusky Bells' and the following year 'Marian's Marvel', both of them grew strongly, flowering from September to the following March. The former had to be planted in the garden last summer, and in spite of the drought (or perhaps because of it?) Flowered in September and is still in full bloom. The latter is in the biggest pot we can manage, and will have to be planted out this summer. Because of the size it has to be kept outside, though we do move it to a sheltered corner. To see the shrubs covered in flowers for so long really lifts the heart on a grey day.

We successfully tried *Podocarpus* 'County Park Fire' and only later found the article about the genus in the magazine. *Olearia* x *scilloniensis* has been a great success, and though badly damaged by frost two years ago and having to be severely pruned, flowered very well last year and is at present covered in bud. Finally, *Prostanthera cuneata* was moved when we remade the patio two years ago, but we lost no flowers that year and it grows slowly but steadily.

I shall miss all my plants when we move in the summer, but hope to make a garden again, and to find more Australian/New Zealand plants from new nurseries. I am no specialist, nor do I grow anything from seed, having neither a greenhouse nor porch, but I do love anything out of the ordinary, and have had much pleasure reading about gardeners with such specialities.

Can anyone else write a similar account of some of the plants in their garden for future issues?

More about the South West

Jeff Irons

In his article "Down Under in the South West" Tim Longville asked about *Grevillea rosmarinifolia* "Jenkinsii". In Australia it is sold as both "Jenkinsii" and "Jenkensii", with the latter being more common. Our Plant Finder uses "Jenkinsii". The shrub is believed to be a hybrid between *G. rosmarinifolia* and *G. lanigera*. I've seen it only once, when Ness Gardens was selling plants imported from the Netherlands under the name G. "Jenkensii". They had flowers very similar to, but slightly smaller than one of my own *G. lanigera x rosmarinfolia*. "Jenkensii" is an attractive flowering shrub with a long flowering season. I have three seedlings of the cross, their leaves differ, as does the balance between red and white in their flowers and the time of year at which they peak. All three bloom from late summer through to late spring. They do peak at different times, One (with lots of *rosmarinifolia* in the leaves) is mainly autumn-winter flowering while another has a spring - early summer peak. The plant with more *lanigera* in its leaves also peaks in spring-early summer. I use the plants as an informal hedge, clipping them once a year to keep the height at around 2-3 feet.

Tim wrote too about *Pomaderris apetala* having white flowers. If the flowers are white then the plant he saw is not *P. apetala*. I've written about this at length in The Plantsman (Vol 13 part 4, March 1992 p.253). Here it is sufficient to say that the green flowers are of no consequence. The leaves do not have much going for them either. Graham Hutchins collected this species during his trip to Tasmania and distributed seeds as being those of *P. elliptica*. Because of their insignificant garden value my own plants, raised from Graham's collection, were grubbed out. In the wild I have seen plants with so much pollen that from a distance the Zealand plants of this species have flowers of a dirty buff colour. Because much of the commercial stock has an Australian origin green flowered plants are seen in New Zealand. Both Cave&Paddison and Metcalf consider that its only use is as a fast growing shelter tree. I can think of one other use. Collect seed from plants with plenty of pollen and sow the seedlings in a forest so that their branches overhang a path. If you are lucky when in flower they will present an attractive canopy. *P. apetala* does have one saving grace. The larvae of some butterflies feed on its leaves. However they also like the very different *Pomaderris elliptica*. This is an excellent plant. Its only rival is *P. kumeraho*. It is likely that Pine Lodge Gardens obtained its plant from Paul



Prostanthera aspalathoides

Allanson, who got it from me, and my specimens were grown from APS seed. This evergreen shrub has attractive glossy leaves and large heads of yellow flowers. It blooms when only a foot high and can be kept small by pruning after flowering. In the 1970's it was not winter hardy in Wirral, but nowadays would probably survive outdoors. The seeds can be difficult to germinate. My tip is to sow them on the surface of compost, then pour boiling water onto the compost.

While it is true that *Prostanthera aspalathoïdes* was not mentioned in my recent article, it was covered in Newletter 16 (May 1996) page 17, where I described it as being ideal for those modern conservatories that reach 120°F. It is winter hardy in Hobart, so hardiness in Cornwall is not surprising. Most of us would be advised to think of it as an indoor plant.

My mention of it for that use was prompted by the natural occurrence in the dry and semi-dry inland parts of Victoria and NSW. The barren landscapes can be brightened by flashes of scarlet (sometimes orange, rarely yellow and even more rarely, white). Inspection shows that the colour comes from the long tubular flowers of *Prostanthera aspalathoïdes*. Even in the bright sunshine of the interior they gleam like lanterns.

Unusually this species grows in deep soil, not among rocks. In cultivation it must have very good drainage and will take as much sun as you can give it. It comes with a "quality" recommendation.

The wonderful name *Coprosma aceroshawera* made we wonder whether it was really *C. acerosa* "Hawera". Sure enough, Cave & Paddison mention a prostrate *Coprosma* with that name. Described as having small olive green leaves and making a tight mat close to the ground, it appears to be only slightly different from the forms listed in the Plant Finder as *C. brunnea*. Tim tells me that an internet trawl brought up many prostrate coprosmas, all virtually indistinguishable. It is worthwhile

pointing out to the unitiated that coprosmas have male plants and female plants. To get berries you must have a male plant that flowers at the same time as your female. The only way to ensure this is buy when plants are in bloom. If you try raising coprosmas from seed you must keep as many seedlings as possible. Most will be female and only a few male. Even so, with the small number that most amateurs grow there will be no guarantee that the male(s) will flower at the same time as females.

I have not come across *Thryptomene* "F.C. Payne". The 2003-4 Plant Finder lists it as "new". However in the 3rd Edition (1992) of his book Australian Native Plants John Wrigley wrote that a selection of *T. saxicola* is sold as Payne's Form or *T. paynei.* He went on to write "This (promotional) name is best forgotten as many naturally occurring clones show equal merit." Once a name has got into the nursery trade it takes a long time for it to be dropped and an internet trawl showed that the name F.C Payne has become common in Australian garden centres. It is an open slightly pendulous shrub from Western Australia that grows to about 1m x 1.5m. In Australia the main flowering period is winter and early spring, when the branches are wreathed with white or pink flowers. Some flowers are seen throughout the year. In Britain it is unlikely to be winter hardy away from the south and west coasts.

Over the years I've picked up the meanings of quite a number of the words that make up plant names. Often they tell me from where a plant comes or what kind of conditions it is likely to need. At other times the 'botanical name' serves as a warning. One such improbable name, mentioned by Tim in passing, is *Microstrobos lanigerum.* Strobos means cone, so microstrobos means "very small cones". Laniger means bearing wool. Have you ever heard of a conifer with woolly cones, or indeed of a conifer with any woolly parts? The true identity of this plant must be in doubt. One possibility would be *Leptospermum lanigerum.* Another would be *Microstrobos fitzgeraldii.* I leave out *M. niphophilus* because every plant that I've seen offered under that name has been *Diselma archeri.* I suspect that as is so often the case one clone has travelled around among nurserymen, in this instance as something that it is not.

Cunninghamii suggests that Tim's *Nestegia cunninghamii* comes from Australia or New Zealand. There was nothing of that name in New Zealand. A search in Australia lead me to *Notelaea ligustrina,* a name given in 1804

The plant came to Britain in 1807, from Tasmania. There this 10m high tree is common along stream banks and on moist hillsides. It is also found on the Southern Tablelands of NSW and in Victoria. The flowers are small and white and the olive like fruits start off a yellowish white in colour, then age through pink to black. Tim asked whether it is related to the podocarps. The answer is that *Notelaea* is in the olive family.

Euodia gingshanensis was more difficult. The specific name suggested China. The genus has been split and if it is Chinese the plant will be a *Tetradium.* I was unable to find anything remotely like it under *Euodia, Evodia, Tetradium* or *Melicope.*

It used to be thought that the southern conifers evolved separately from the northern ones. As botanical knowledge has increased opinions have changed. Most present day botanists put the southern conifers in the same family as yew. *Podocarpaceae* has been replaced by *Taxaceae* and podocarp is used only as a general descriptive "handle". Some individual species names have also changed. *Podocarpus colensoi* has been referred to as *Manoao colensoi* since 1995. *Podocarpus spicatus* has been *Prumnopitys taxifolia* since 1978.

Another conifer mentioned with some surprise was *Agathis robusta.* This large tree, which is winter hardy in southern Australia, has a disjunct distribution, being found in both Far North Queensland and southern Queensland. It seems likely that the winter hardy plants grown in south eastern Australian gardens and now a Cornish one, originate from south Queensland stock. Slow growing in the early years it would make a good indoor pot plant for British houses.

Tim's report of his visit to Cornwall must have made many of us wish that we could grow some of the plants that he saw and mentioned. Slight inconsistencies in naming are just par for the course. I for one look forward to the account of his 2004 visit.

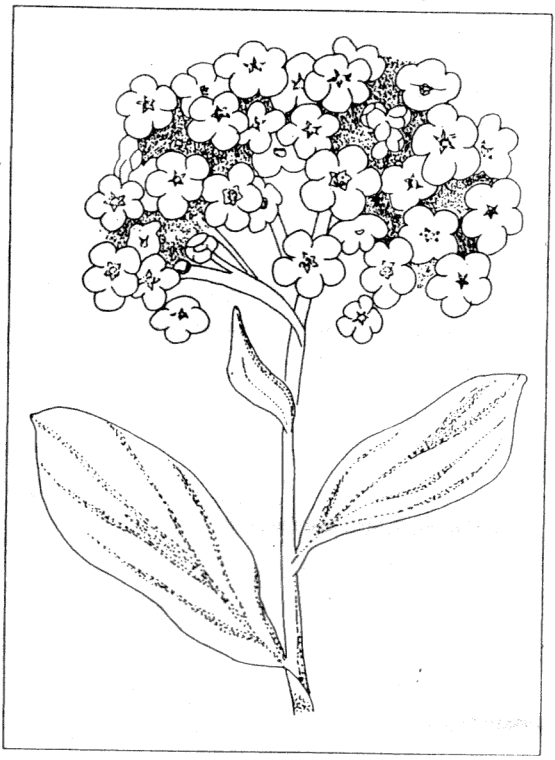
P.S.
Could *Nestegia cunninghamii* be *Nestegis cunninghamii,* one of the four species of 'native olives' found in NZ? Also known as Black Maire, the juvenile leaves are much narrower than the adult ones, although often longer and willow-like. The species forms part of the tree canopy as far north as the northern South Island. Maoris traditionally fashioned the wood into bird spears for hunting food. The fruits of the tree are edible.

Sue Hyams

More on Myosotidium

By Tim Longville

In his report in *Pentachondra 31*, Hugh Barr kindly thought I'd do better with *Myosotidium hortensia* at virtual sea-level by the coast in Cumbria than he does 700 feet up and 40 miles inland. In fact, interestingly, I don't. Why?



Three reasons, I think.

- First, my site is almost flat so moisture doesn't easily drain away.
- Second, my soil is heavy and moisture-retentive and remains so even though I do all my gardening in raised beds with added sand and grit.
- Third, the garden is surrounded by tall Victorian red sandstone walls. Why is that a disadvantage? Because the soft sandstone and its soft pointing have both worn into considerable holes over the century and a half since the walls were built. When repaired, what's more, they rehole with depressing speed.

Result? A Hilton for gastropods, which here have become battalion-strong squatters it's impossible ever to completely to dislodge.

So though *Myosotidium* survives here, and certainly isn't troubled by the garden's winter temperatures, it doesn't flourish. It gets too wet and tends to

rot, then when it's already under stress some slug or snail comes and nibbles straight through the stems of some of its few remaining desperate leaves.

(Of course, I could protect them with glass over-winter or grow them in pots but I incline more and more to grow only those plants which can cope more or less unaided with my conditions. At least, I can do so after whatever I contrive to give them by way of help at the time of planting.)

Mysotidium hortensia in Thirsk - Winter 03/04

Unlike Tim, I grow my Chatham Island Forget-Me-Nots in containers so that I can overwinter them under glass, something I have done for seven out of the past eight years.

Only in winter 02/03 did I leave the two large ceramic pots of *Myosotidium* outside but the foliage was badly frosted, later becoming blackened and rotten. I suspect the fact that the winter wasn't too wet probably saved my plants from dying off. Despite their ordeal, 13 clusters of blue flowers appeared in May/June. A few seeds resulted; only one has germinated and even in the greenhouse, the snails are good at finding it!

This winter the plants have enjoyed the indoor treatment again, retaining their boldly ribbed glossy leaves. In mid April several developing flower clusters are already visible. **Sue Hyams**

Verticordia, Geraldton Wax Flower and leaching

Tim Darrington would like to know if any member has had success with the germination of *Verticordia* sp, or *Chamelaucium uncinatum* Geraldton Wax Flower. Tim lives in the Rhone valley, 30km south of Lyon and has been trying to get *V. nitens, V. mitchelliana* and *V. forrestii* (the last two APS seed) to germinate without any success.

'I have tried smoke granules on all three in 2003. In 2002 I sowed the first two, and in 2001 just *V. nitens.*

Then onto Geraldton Wax. Again I have tried to grow from seed for 4 years now. I have used seed from 2 different Australian suppliers without any success. I have tried leaching in a lavatory cistern for 6 weeks before sowing. I have tried soaking them in 0.01M NaOH solution for 3hr/1day/7days on the basis that wax becomes soap and thus soluble under the effect of sodium hydroxide (according to my schoolboy chemistry).

Has anyone had any success with these species, and if so what is the trick?'

Exchange & Mart

A year ago it was suggested that the Exchange & Mart column was resurrected after a long absence. This is a way of sharing plants and/or seeds with fellow members, and the sharing of experiences gained from growing these plants.

Exchange & Mart is a service offered by the Society for its members. It is a way of making surplus plants available to others. Any profit after costs for postage and packing (ie. 1st class stamp, padded envelope, pot, label, compost etc) are ploughed back into the Society.

Young plants for sale (15 months old), profits to the APS

- Epacris serpyllifolia
- Richea x curtisiae

£5 each, plus £1.50 postage and packing per order.

J. Irons, 74 Brimstage Road, HESWALL, CH60 1XG

Tony Entwistle offers the following:

Seed ex Tasmania, but by no means only Tasmanian natives

- Leptospermum/Callistemon mixture (may contain a few strays of Eucalyptus
- Eucalyptus/Angophora mixed (+ some strays of above)

Send 1st class stamp.

***

- A few seedlings of Hymenospermum flavum
- Two rooted cuttings of Ceratopetalum gummiferum

First come, first served.
Send two 1st class stamps.

Tony Entwistle
Ophrys
113 Station Road
Delamere
Northwich
Cheshire CW8 2HZ

If you have any surplus seedlings that you are willing to pass onto other members, please let the Society know.

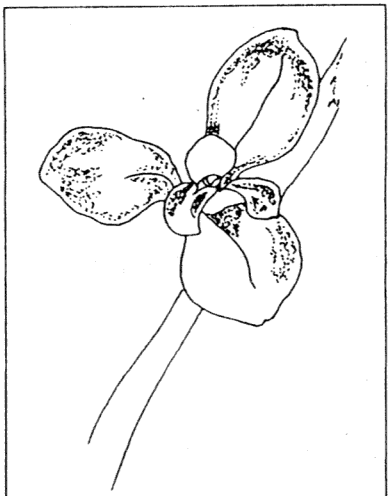
Seedlist 2004 Seedlists will not be sent out automatically.
If you want one, please send a self addressed label and a stamp to Richard Christmas, Millfield Farm, Guest Slack, Kingsley, Frodsham, Cheshire WA6 8BT

Antipodean Irids

Jeff Irons

Unlike South Africa, Australia and New Zealand have few monocots. Most of the Australian *Liliiflorae* species are in the *Asparagales* and only 5 of the few *Liliales* species are in the *Iridaceae*. New Zealand has four bulbous monocots, all of them in *Libertia* and while 3 are New Zealand endemics the other is shared with Australia. There are a further two undescribed *Libertia* in New Zealand.

Whereas the other 2 *Dietes* species are South African, the robust tussock forming *D. robinsoniana* is an Australian, endemic to Lord Howe Island. Its height varies from 1 to 2m. Very showy, it has been grown in England for over 100 years. Each white flower is short lived but since they open in succession and there can be over 100 in an inflorescence, the flowering period is long. The species is usually grown as an indoor plant. However since the wild occurrence is from the coast to the mountain tops, it seems likely that seed of a suitable provenance would yield plants that are winter hardy in the milder parts of Britain. Like other *Dietes*, plants take several years to reach flowering age. They need a large pot.



Diplarrena moraea

Only the enthusiastic collector will want both of the two *Diplarrena* species. The Tasmanian *D. latifolia* is a good garden plant but *D. moraea* has flowers that are too small for the size of the plant and their stems are too long. It is also less cold tolerant.
Both species can have leaves up to 1m or more long and both can have flower scapes extending to about 1m. *D. moraea* has a more tussocky appearance than *D. latifolia*, whose leaves are arranged in a fan shape. Because there is a width overlap leaf width is not a good identification feature and gardeners will find that species can be separated reliably only when they are in bloom.

It is then easy. The inner segments of *D. latifolia* flowers have purple streaks extending to their outer margins and yellow markings towards the centre. The colours are reversed in the flowers of *D. moraea.* It has the purple colour in the centre of the segments while the margins are pale. Unlike those of *Libertia* and *Patersonia* the flowers of *Diplarrena* are not symmetrical. They are zygomorphic not actinomorphic.

D. latifolia is a mountain plant from the Central Plateau, South West and west of Tasmania. In British cultivation it has proved to be long lived and can withstand the hot dry summers of East Anglia, winter temperatures of -18°C with no snow cover and soil that is waterlogged in winter. It is not affected by pests and can be left for years without division. The only defect appears to be that leaf tips can be browned in cold winters. It will flower in almost any situation except deep shade. Except that some of the small forms, say about 15cm high, need cool, moist, peaty conditions the species is not fussy about soil. It may be too that calcareous soils are not tolerated. The flowers appear in late spring or early summer and although each individual bloom lasts only a day the flowering period extends over about 3 weeks. All in all, this is an easy and rewarding plant. Nurserymen have not yet latched on to the fact that they can exploit the large variation in flower shape, markings and size of both plant and flower. Consequently there has only ever been one named selection. A Tasmanian nursery (now closed) used to offer a form under the unregistered name "Amethyst Fairy".

Readers will notice that here the name has been spelt *Diplarrena,* not *Diplarrhena* as it is in the Plant Finder. This is not a mistake but is because I have followed the practice of Australian botanists. They use the earliest known spelling, given by the French botanist Labillardière in 1799. The Plant Finder uses Brown's 1810 spelling.

Nurseries often sell a form of *D. latifolia* with fairly narrow leaves, about 30cm long, as *D. moraea.* Care needs to be taken when buying any *Diplarrena* unseen.

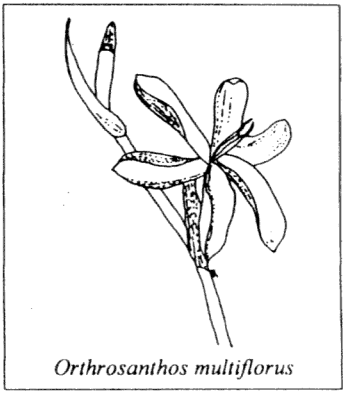
The Tasmanian endemic *Isophysis tasmanica* can be very spectacular when in bloom. Up to 40cm high, its scape has perianth segments up to 6cm long. Usually a purplish red, they can be a brownish purple, yellow or buff. Unfortunately although seed germinates readily the seedlings are not easy to grow on. The most informative information that can be obtained from Tasmanians is "We don't find it easy". I have never succeeded in keeping a plant for more than 3 years and have never flowered one. Statements in books that

Isophysis occurs from mountain areas to near sea level are misleading to people who do not know Tasmania. Both its timber line and its tree limit slope downwards from east to west, so places in western Tasmania close to the sea have a much cooler climate than places at a similar altitude in the east of the State. Wherever it is found, *Isophysis* is a plant of very acid wet heaths and sedge moors. My own limited propagating facilities are always fully occupied by species more akin to my interests than *Isophysis*. Consequently, even though there is great scope for experimentation, I have not made any effort to study its propagation. A good starting point for anyone interested would be to find out whether the extreme conditions under which it is found are necessary; or whether it is there simply because that is the only place where it would not be swamped by other more vigorous plants. Perhaps it will actually grow better under more benign conditions.

We are all familiar with *Libertia grandiflora*, even if it is only from having seen the plants at Bodnant. Like it *L. ixioides* is another New Zealander and is just as easy to grow. Unlike those of *L grandiflora* its flower heads do not extend above the foliage and the long lasting seed pods are bright yellow. The main horticultural characteristic of this species is that it tolerates dry shade, so is a good ground storey plant for woodland. Under such conditions the leaves are dark green, whereas in sun they often take on a yellowish hue. Though I have not seen the forms sold as "Gold Leaf" it is conceivable that some seedlings would colour up in sun more strongly than others. Whether they are worth separating out depends on the degree to which one is inclined to split cultivated forms. In any case seed saved from a plant that colours strongly will not breed true to the parent. As its name implies, *L. peregrinans* is a wanderer. In fact in dry sandy soil it can be invasive. Although it can be as much as 40cm high, the form usually seen in British gardens is much smaller, only about15cm high. The principal use is as a foliage plant. The leaves have a prominent orange band down their centres and this shows up well in low winter sunlight. The small white flowers, seen in summer, do not make much of an impact. *Libertia paniculata* makes a dense tuft, with leaves up to 60cm. long. The white flowers, on scapes shorter than the leaves, appear in summer. This is a plant from moist sheltered gullies. Successful cultivation requires a similar situation, and for some gardeners it is really an indoor plant. *L. pulchella* has two forms. One of them, var. *pulchella* is found in Tasmania, Victoria, NSW, New Zealand and New Guinea. It has leaves up to 18cm long and a floral scape 6.5-40cm long. I have not grown this variety.

The other, var. *pygmaea* is a Tasmanian endemic. Its leaves are up to 3.5cm long and the scape is up to 5cm. Apart from the size difference, the other differentiating factor is that var. pyg*maea* does not have a bract. In the garden var. *pygmaea* will stand frost heave and grow in waterlogged soil. Nevertheless the small size makes it more suitable for cultivation as a pot plant and under such conditions its small, white, early summer flowers can be enjoyed. The 2003/4 Plantfinder lists only two suppliers. Neither is Langthorn's Plantery, to which I supplied seedlings of var.*pygmaea* in 1988.

Whatever is said about the Antipodean libertias, they are outshone by the South American *L. caerulescens*. If space allows only one *Libertia* it has to be the species chosen.



Orthrosanthos multiflorus

Four of the 7 *Orthrosanthos* species occur in Australia and the other 3 are South American. I have grown only two, *O. laxus* and *O. multiflorus*. Both live up to their common name of Morning Flag. Visit them at 4.30 on a summer morning and you will find the flowers open. They close promptly at 1pm British Summer Time. Both are tufted perennial forbs with lax leaves about 70-100cm long. They flower in early summer on scapes up to 1m tall. The difference between them is that whereas *O. laxus* has 2-4 short stemmed flowers on each branch *O. multiflorus* has 3-7 long stemmed flowers on a branch. The flowers of *O. multiflorus* are always pale blue, whereas those of *O. laxus*, though usually blue, can be white. Another difference is that if you look at the stamens, those of *O. multiflorus* are fused together, making a tube, whereas those of *O. laxus* are not. The other two Australian species both have flowers on stalks shorter than the leaves. The spring flowering *O. muelleri* has short leaves, less than 20cm long. *O. polystachyus* has greyish leaves and short stemmed flower spikes. There is some evidence that *Orthrosanthos* need frequent division to maintain their floriferousness.

Finally there is *Patersonia*. Western Australia is home to most of the 17 Australian species. Another two are found in Malesia. It is a fairly general rule that

the more humid climate of south eastern Australia and by extension, in England. Those we can grow (probably with winter protection) come from the south west of Western Australia. In *Patersonia* the outer lobes of the flower are much larger than the inner ones, giving a 3 petalled effect. The two species that I have grown, *P. sericea* and *P. occidentalis* were collected in a high part of the eastern State, New South Wales. Like the other Irids mentioned, patersonias can be grown easily from seed. The early spring flowering *P. sericea* is found on the coast and tablelands from eastern Victoria to Rockhampton, on the Tropic of Capricorn. Obviously the location will affect winter cold tolerance. The species is always found on sandy or stony soil and from the latitude of Sydney northwards is in a summer rain area. Given an acid sandy soil it will grow rapidly and in the 3rd year from seed its eye catching blue flowers, 2-3cm long, will open on sunny days in spring and summer. In spite of the name, the spring flowering *P. occidentalis* is found in a broad swathe from coastal Victoria and north eastern Tasmania across to south west Western Australia, chiefly on poorly drained sites. The blue-violet flowers are up to 5cm long. Like *P. sericea* it has proved hardy in both near coastal north west England and the southern suburbs of Manchester. Plants from Western Australia are larger than those from eastern Australia and grow in wetter conditions.

The Antipodean Irids extend the choice of plants open to *Iridaceae* lovers. They can both present challenges and be easy and trouble free.

DEATH BY HEATSTROKE?

Tim Longville writes :

'Sue Hyams' experience with *Aciphylla aurea*, which rotted off she thinks because she overwatered it during the hot dry height of summer, reminded me of the death here in 2003 of another aciphylla species. It was a death which baffled me at the time and continued to do so until recently. Then, during a 'telephonic consultation', Plant Agony Uncle' Gary Dunlop suggested a possible explanation.

The plant was *A. scott-thompsonii*, grown from seed several years ago, and by summer 2003 of a formidable size: the rosette was at least a metre across. I had, I'm sure I hardly need to say, not expected it to grow so big. So I'd planted it in a seriously silly situation, far too near a path. Several of our larger visitors suffered impalement on its vicious

spikes as a result. The spot in which it was planted was towards the front of a miniature pseudo-scree bed, sloping to the west, with soil that was little more than dust, and a hefty topping of grit. It had been in that situation throughout several coldish wet winters and un-hot wet summers and had never shown any signs of distress. I was beginning eagerly to anticipate its surely incipient flowering - and to anticipate even more eagerly getting rid of the sbsequent monocarpic corpse and never growing it again. But I did want to see it in flower first. So I was both miffed and mistified when towards the end of August it suddenly, with no forewarning at all, exploded.

Overnight this stiffly upright monster disintegrated, flew apart, and became instead simply a series of individual (if still lethal, as I discovered to my cost...) 'swords' lying in a circle on the ground. When I cautiously approached them, I saw and smelt what had happened: the brute had rotted. Its whole core had turned to mush, as had the ends of each segment. Yet we hadn't had a drop of rain for six weeks and it was not a plant I had ever even *thought* of watering. I couldn't imagine what could have caused the disaster. All I could think of was that perhaps some below-ground pest or parasite had attacked it but when I dug carefully among and around its rotted roots I could find no evidence to support that theory - and I couldn't come up with an alternative.

So, months later, 'Mystified of Maryport' put the continuing and irritating mystery to Gary. His suggested solution? In effect, the poor brute had fried. It had failed to cope with the heat and drought, not helped by the poor soil and thick heat-retaining layer of grit. (He pointed out that high temperatures have similar effects on celmisias).

I was happy to have any solution. But I'd be even happier if others agree that, yes, in all likelihood, that was what had happened. Has any other member had experience of a plant which endured 'A Rotten Rotting Death' - but one caused by heat?

*****

Australian Plants in Central France

Tim Darrington

I live in the Rhône valley - at Vienne - 30km south of Lyon at about 45° latitude. The last two winters (2001-2 and 2002-3) have been the hardest experienced in the 11 years that I have been in the Rhône-Alpes Region. In 2002-3 we had one night at -12°C and then a very late frost on the 7th/8th April which caused a great deal of damage to 'European' plants. Winter 2001-2002 had a long cold period with -10°C every night for 3 weeks in December, then -8°C for most nights in

January. The garden is well drained, north facing on a slope that varies between 1 in 4 and 1 in 10. The sub-soil is micaceous-schist – producing a nutrient poor top-soil which breaks down into cuboid particles. Four years ago, when the house was built, some more clay-like-soil was brought in, but the overall mix is still on the sandy side of clay.

Since autumn 2002 I have had a 6 x 4m unheated greenhouse, in which I have installed a fan unit that brings in warmer air from the house. The greenhouse itself is still not frost free. That luxury is confined to a small inner 'greenhouse' about 1m square. I also have a cold frame in a favourable spot for overwintering. It is perhaps as much as 7°C warmer than the outside air. We have a large garage/basement where I can overwinter plants. Since it faces north I supplement the light. Originally a 75 watt filament bulb was used but since autumn 2003 a 37 watt fluorescent tube has been used.

My conclusions from four growing seasons are:

- Much more data is needed on which species tolerate low light levels and which tolerate low temperatures. Although these are are two main enemies few APS members seem to report their experiences.

I think the propagation guide should say more about the necessity of a greenhouse and the low light level problem. (Ed. we'll try to address this.)

Many species do not appreciate being kept in heated living rooms through winter; (in a south window) I've had *Callistemon* and *Templetonia* die in these conditions. In general I have found that Proteaceae put up with this solution better than many other genera. I've tried *Hakea laurina* and *Isopogon dubius* with success. I am trying *Boronia heterophylla*, *Eucalyptus erythrocorys* and *Hardenbergia comptoniana* at the moment.

We need to get low P Osmocote available in Europe. I am convinced that for the majority of Australian species a little fertiliser promotes growth. I am fortunate in having a brother in Perth W.A. who can supply me with this stuff. (Ed. we have offered to get this for members, see Pentachondra Dec.2002 , page 17).

I get problems with moss and *Oxalis* seedlings in my seed pots. Can any member suggest a remedy?

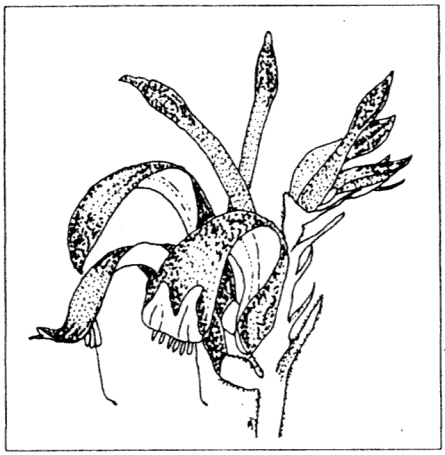
Defining success as growing a plant to flowering age, some of mine are:

Anigozanthos flavidus, Kennedya prostrata, diverse species of everlastings, *Craspedia glauca, Trachymene caerulea, Callistemon rigidus, Callistemon rugulosus* (killed by a cold winter), *Prostanthera cuneata, Brachyscome iberidifolia* and *Swainsona formosa* (syn *Clianthus formosus*).

I think that without cold winters I should get *Acacia dealbata* and *retinodes* to flower – there was an enormous plant of *A. dealbata* in a Vienne garden until about 2 years ago, when a cold winter cut it to the ground. Like mine it is sprouting again. I am quite proud of the *Hakea laurina* and the *Xanthorrhoea preisii* which are both nearly 4 years old. The *Xanthorrhoea* liked last summer's hot weather – especially the period in July and August that was spent in the greenhouse because I was away on holiday. Then temperatures got up to over 50°C.

Since buying a bottom heater I am trying to take cuttings from all kinds of genera, especially those that I find difficult to reproduce from seed. Already Geraldton Wax, *Callistemon rigidus* and *Boronia heterophylla* have been reproduced by this means.

More on Kangaroo Paws



Following the articles in the last issue of Pentachondra concerning Kangaroo Paws, **Jeff Layman** writes the following:

Quite a few interesting articles on Kangaroo Paws in the last Newsletter. I feel, though, that there was an error in Brian Halliwell's comment on Kew's experience. He stated that *Anigozanthos viridis* was reasonably hardy and had dull green flowers. I believe that this should have been *A. flavidus*. There is no doubting the relative hardiness of *A. flavidus*, but I doubt that the same could be said of *A. viridis*. Although it comes from dampish areas (and I can confirm that as I got wet knees photographing it!) rather than sandy ones, I think it has more or less the same hardiness as *A. manglesii*. In other words, it really isn't what we would call "hardy" at all. And it most certainly isn't dull green. It has more or less the same green flowers as *A. manglesii*, but without the red stems. I have succeeded in germinating seeds of it, but never had a flower - yet another way in which it emulates *A. manglesii*!

In contrast, for me *A. flavidus* has survived outside - albeit at the foot of a wall - for many years. Originally, I had both the dull green form and the reddish form, but gave away one of the latter, and then lost the only other one I had.

But I have had success with *A. preissei* and *A. humilis*. The former I obtained from a nursery about 15 years ago. I still have it, but it doesn't flower regularly; it more or less just sits there surviving. The latter grew well and flowered for a couple of years, but then succumbed to the dreaded black ink disease.

In May 2002 I got our Society's seed of *A. bicolor*. What a star! Good germination, rapid growth, and a lot of flowers. It started flowering in mid-October 2003, and at the time of writing (early December), it still has flowers and there are more to come. There would be even more, but something is eating through the flowering stems and buds. It makes a most attractive plant, somewhat resembling a mini *A. manglesii*. If the Society offers seeds in 2004, I most certainly recommend it.

Now, can anyone help me out (and Brian, it appears) in germinating *Macropidia fuliginosa*? I've given up with this species. The only way to get the plant would seem to be in tissue culture from Australia (Zanthorrhoea Nurseries did it a few years ago). But it wouldn't be cheap, and it would need a commercial nursery here to order them.

Garden Thugs

A leaflet of this title recently came my way from the Australian Environmental Weeds Action Network which makes interesting reading.

It is well known that a lot of naturalised weeds have come from plants originally cultivated in gardens, some of course deliberately introduced for timber, windbreaks and soil stabilisers.

Australia and South Africa seem to have the worst problems, with their own reciprocal list of weeds - South Africa mostly with Australian trees and shrubs eg. *Acacia, Albizia, Hakea,* whilst Australia has mostly South African bulbs, corms, tubers etc of the Liliaceae, Amaryllidaceae, Iridaceae and Araceae Families.

The list of potential weeds called Garden Thugs, which gardeners are advised to avoid, is very extensive. Herbaceous plants include lavender, *Verbascum, Oenanthera, Salvia, Verbena, Euphorbia, Leonotis, Pelargonium, Alstroemeria, Arctotis, Gaura, Osteospermum, Agapanthus, Hypericum, Gazania, Hieracium aurantiacum;* climbers - *Cryptostegia* (Rubber Vine), *Ipomea, Allamanda, Lonicera, Hedera,* nasturtium, *Rubus, Rosa, Passiflora* and *Cardiospermum;* grasses - pampas, bullrush, *Stipa, Miscanthus,* bamboos; shrubs - *Tamarisk, Ailanthus, Oleander, Salix, Populus, Cotoneaster, Pyracantha, Genista, Ulex, Lantana, Podalyria, Datura, Buddleya, Polygala;* bulbs etc - as expected, most South Africans (freesias, ixias, babianas, etc), *and Oxalis, Canna, Zantedeschia, Crocosmia;* floating aquatics - *Eichornia, Sagittaria, Salvinia, Pistea, Pontederia, Azolla, Myriophyllum.* Included are also many eastern Australian spp. of Acacias, and Eucalypts for Western Australia.

We do not have this problem here, partly because of our winters, partly because in our crowded suburbia there are few open natural spaces. But we can still see how *Buddleia* invades waste land (as it did in the war in the blitz sites). We do have some declared weeds such as Japanese knotweed and giant hogweed, and *Rhododendron ponticum* and *Impatiens roylei* are serious environmental weeds in some areas. What about the common sycamore, which is certainly not a native though with us for centuries? And many of the aquatics mentioned have been problems on our canals and rivers, especially after mild winters. The Australian *Crassula helmsii* is already a menace here.

I have certainly noticed the invasion of *Hedychium* in the Azores, and of *Eucalyptus globulus* in Portugal.

Whether a naturalised species becomes an environmental weed

affecting the native ecology depends on many factors. If it remains local or of tenuous hold maybe not, but the main problems seem to be :

- 1. Ground plants which quickly form thick mats of rhizomes, corms, bulbs etc smothering native vegetation and regeneration,
- 2. Climbers and sprawlers which form thickets, achieving likewise and
- 3. Shrubs and trees which seed freely, grow quickly and prevent indigenous spp from reproducing.
- 4. Many species can also be very thirsty and lower the water level, which not only affects the local flora but can have considerable effects "downstream", as well as affecting agriculture and human water supply.

A change in the local flora will then affect insects, and the native fauna in general.

The cost of *Acacia mearnsii* (a Tasmanian sp) alone in South Africa is estimated at $1426 million annually from water deprivation.

We all have our own "thugs" - mine would be *Helxine soleirolii* and *Meconopsis cambrica* which I am careful not to let out of the garden for fear they will cover Cheshire!

Tony Entwistle

ANZ plants become garden weeds

A letter in the January 2004 BSBI News reports that the Australian *Pratia pedunculata* has joined the New Zealand *P. angulata* as a lawn weed. Apparently any fragment will root in damp turf. This makes it especially bad when mowings are left on the lawn. It is reported to have gone wild and completely cover lawns in Westmoreland, Cheshire, S.E. Lancs and Worcs. At least, unlike *Veronica filiformis*, this weed should succumb to systemic weedkillers.

Jeff Irons

Nursery Report

I had the opportunity last October to visit The Old Walled Garden at Hadlow in Kent. This is very much the 'back of beyond' and I defy anyone to find it without phoning for final instructions when they get to Hadlow (as recommended by the owners!) The nursery is the old part of what is now a retreat house. You will be met on arrival by John and Heather Angrave, and an assortment of very friendly dogs. The nursery is full of polytunnels brimming with Australian plants, especially Callistemons (they have the national collection) and Grevilleas, and you will be tempted as I was to buy many plants, at reasonable prices; I had to limit my selection as the plants were going back on the plane to Manchester that evening!

They will do mail order again now.

Tony Entwistle

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