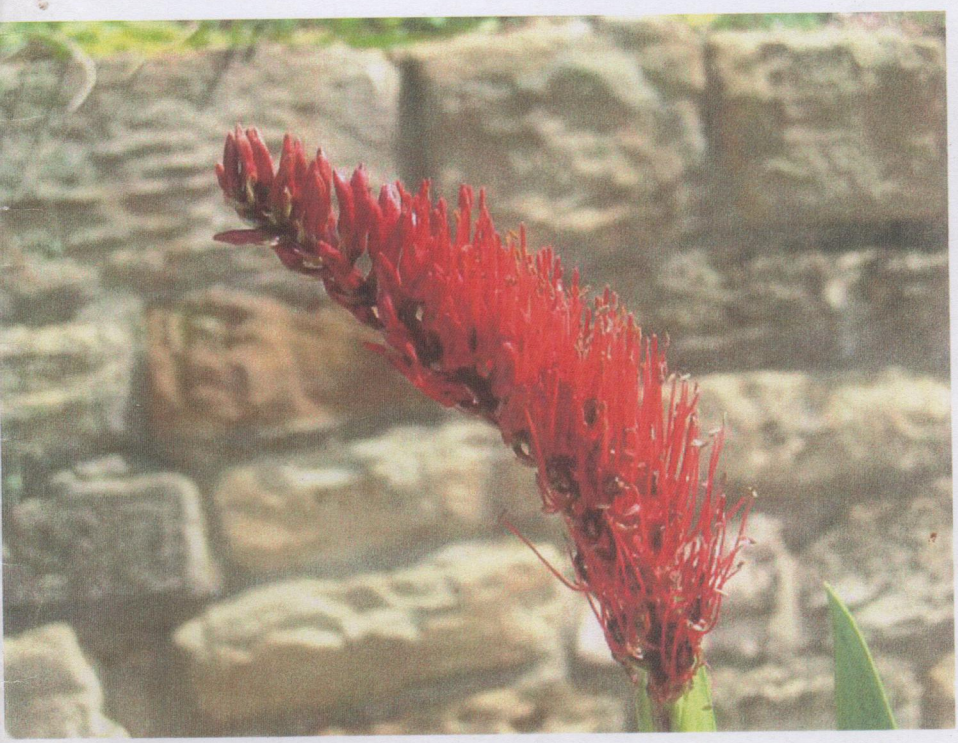
AUSTRALASIAN PLANT SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

PENTACHONDRA

ISSUE 35 DECEMBER 2005



Xeronema callistemon

AUSTRALASIAN PLANT SOCIETY

Newsletter No.35

December 2005

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Cover photographs.....many thanks to Greg Plenty for supplying the pictures for this issue.

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EDITORIAL

A big thank you to all those members who submitted articles for this issue, most of them as a result of chairman Keith emailing members several weeks before the deadline (thanks Keith). Articles are welcome at any time - if you've got something to report, jot it down and send it in before you forget! Without your contributions, there wouldn't be a newsletter! Digital images/photos are also welcome.

Articles are now required for the Spring 2006 issue. The deadline is slightly earlier than in previous years, to allow for more notice of the 2006 Annual Get-Together.

Deadline for the Spring Issue is March 1st.

Articles can be sent on floppy disk or CD. Acceptable formats are Microsoft Word, RFT and TXT.

Typewritten reports are welcome as are short handwritten reports but please print place/botanical names.

If writing about success/failure in your own garden, please try to include information about your local climate, soil type, shelter, growing aspect etc.

Please send to Sue Hyams,
Applegarth, Knayton, Thirsk,
N. Yorks, YO7 4AS;
Email : sue.hyams@ic24.net
Tel: 01845 537407

Appointment of Secretary

The Committee is pleased to welcome Nicky Zanen as Secretary who seems very enthusiastic to help the society move forward. Nicky is a former president of the Victorian SGAP.

From your new secretary

Thank you for allowing me to take on the role of Secretary. As background, I have been involved with the Society for Growing Australian Plants (SGAP) which has now become the Australian Plants Society (APS) in Victoria for some 25 years now. This began with a bare garden, a keen interest in attracting birds, and attending a talk given by Bill King at the local SGAP group. The successful formula? Planting the right type of plants. There followed an amazing journey of discovery. My involvement also gave me an enormous appreciation of the 'bush', even in its starkness.

I have been living in the UK now for 4 years and whilst I don't have a garden of my own or facilities to propagate etc, my enthusiasm for Aussie plants remains unabated. Actually this is not strictly true, as much to my guilt, I have planted an *Adenanthos sericea* in Winchmore Hill, London, (one of the plants I saw in the Albany area, and also one which originated from my garden in Scoresby which APS member Liesbeth Uijtewaal propagated in Holland) which has flowered and grows, albeit very slowly. My guilt because I feel it is so much in

the wrong country, gets so cold, and doesn't have a chance of escape.

It is lovely to be able to share my interest and enthusiasm through this group and I hope to be able to play a pivotal role in connecting the UK group and members with Australian ones.

Nicky Zanen

ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday 4th June 2005

Sheffield Botanic Gardens.

By Anne & Dennis Rowlinson

Anne and I reached the gardens early and so were able to stroll around the restored greenhouses and admire them. They were extremely well refurbished and the new work fitted in very well with the original design, as did the planting. We then wandered round the gardens viewing the plant beds, quite a lot of which were being upgraded and replanted.

After lunch I joined the group of members in the hall, which had a good range of Australian plant pictures on show and a very good collection of plants brought along by the members.

The AGM business was introduced by Simon Olpin; last year's minutes were read and accepted. Then, after the presentation of the accounts by Tony Entwistle, a discussion took place on the raising of the subscription level to allow some flexibility in the future. A level of £10 for home and overseas members with a level of £12 for joint membership was suggested and agreed. This was unanimously accepted by the members.

All the present officers were re-appointed and Nicky Zanen volunteered to become Secretary; this was accepted.

After the AGM business had finished Nicky gave a talk on the plants she had grown in Australia illustrated by some very good photographs.

The meeting finished and the plant sale and swapping took place.

When this finished most members visited Simon Olpin's garden and were conducted round. They were impressed by a fine collection of Palms and Bamboos.

Southern Member's Meeting 2 July 2005

Judy and Steve's place is on the edge of town and the garden faces south. Once the mists lifted you could see the sea, and the ruins of the fort in Hastings.

Eight members who attended had a perfect day there, with sun streaming, enjoying cups of coffee outdoors and eating like kings. A delicious spread was provided.

We wandered around Judy's garden : In flower were prostanthera, *Bauera rubioides*, a number of correas, a lovely leptospermum, callistemons, *Prostanthera cuneata*, a lovely little plant and one of my favourites, an *Isotoma axillaris* (seeing this brought to mind the warnings we used to issue that you don't rub your eyes if you handle this plant - the white sap is very toxic); *Dianella caerulea* - blue flax lily; *Cordyline australis* (a New Zealand plant, which used to be the bane of my son as the leaves always got tangled in the lawn mower); *Xanthorrhoea australis* which was planted outside and some lovely kangaroo paws in Judy's greenhouse with loads of flowers. An *Acacia baileyana* var. *purpurea* in the south west corner of the garden was not thriving - possibly because of bad drainage.

It was really helpful to get Judy's plant list before our visit and to recognise so many names.

After lunch a few of us explored Alexandra Park which held some spectacular trees including a couple of eucalypts. A lovely day and thanks Judy and Steve for hosting it.

Nicky Zanen

Northern Meeting

Report by Dennis Rowlinson

The 'Northern Meeting' was held at Laura and Greg Plenty's house (Batley, West Yorkshire) on 10th July, and 11 people attended. Greg showed the party all the new plants which had been planted and reported the progress of many others that had been newly planted at the time of the last visit. The range of plants was amazing, as well as a great many Australians, there were extremely good collection of ferns and cannas. The Eucalypts were very fine with some unusual ones (to me) being grown.

Laura provided a very lovely lunch, which was eaten in the garden with the sunshine beating down. During lunch a great time was had talking about plants, trees, gardens and holidays taken to see them.

The group then had a plant swap and sale, which saw some very nice plants changing hands. The meeting finished with us all thanking Laura and Greg for organising a really good day.

Details of next year's get-togethers will be in the Spring 2006 issue.

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE!

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

Single member	£10.00
Household	£12.00
Overseas	£10.00

All members are reminded that **unless they pay by Standing Order**, subscriptions for 2006 are due on January 1st 2006. Members who do not pay by direct debit are reminded that if payment is not received by the end of March, membership will be deemed to have terminated. No further reminders will be issued.

Subscriptions for 2006
By Tony Entwistle

The subscription for 2006 (as decided after lengthy discussion at the AGM) will be £10 for both home and overseas members, joint members (at the same address) £12 . This will appear a large increase, but as I explained earlier (in a previous newsletter) at least £2 would be needed to cover the increased journal cost and we need to cover future expenses e.g. printing, postage, so that I would hope there will be no further increase for perhaps the next five years. However, this will be reviewed annually.

Members who have paid by Standing Order in previous years should have received a new form to take to their bank (if not please advise me). Members who have only joined between January and May this year will have received the old standing order form for £6 and may have already taken this to their bank. They should take no further action - they will be sent new forms for 2007 next year, when I know who they are, which will not be until Feb 06 - they will have done well for 2006!

As a slight concession the charge for seeds in 2006 will be reduced to £2.

Everyone is welcome!

Whether its the annual meeting or one of the regional meetings, these get-togethers are very informal. All members are welcome. Please don't think you have to have a wide knowledge of oz/nz plants to attend. All we want is your enthusiasm. Soon you will be making new friends, learning about new plants, gleaning useful info and before you know it, growing your own little piece of the antipodes! So next year, mark those dates on your calender and enjoy meeting like-minded folk.

Garden Report from Abergavenny, South Wales

By Tom Bramley

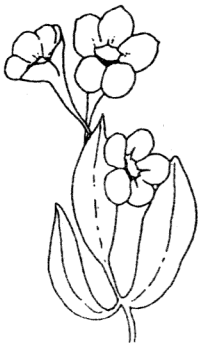
This year has been an interesting one here in 'Old South Wales'. Most plants came through the winter unscathed and an early sowing of *Solanum laciniatum* has provided a number of plants which currently stand at 2 metres and have flowered continuously all summer. They are now showing their yellow / orange berries, which may be of interest to some of the native wild life.



Solanum laciniatum

A plant of *Pandorea jasminoides* 'Rosea' was planted in the spring at the foot of a very sunny hedge. Constant watering has been necessary to keep this growing throughout the summer as I fear the plant prefers a slightly moister position. However despite looking sickly and almost defoliating after the planting in the spring it has now fully recovered and has reach a height of 2m into the neighbour's adjacent holly tree. It has also produced repeated blooms from a single spur of flowers from July to October which means if I can get it to achieve a larger size (and I can get it through the winter) it might lead to a more spectacular display!

A seed grown *Eucalyptus nicholii* which was moved from our previous house as a bare root sapling of 1.2 metres now stands at over 4m in just two seasons. This too was planted in a very poor dry position, however it does not seem to have been hindered, early watering to aid establishment was all that was required. It now exhibits its cinnamon



Pandorea jasminoides

Commonly known as the Bower Plant, this twining climber produces tubular flowers in small panicles. The form 'Rosea' has pink flowers with even deeper pink throats.

coloured bark and is proving to be quite a stunner.

In the shady border the *Diplarrena latifolia* flowered for the first time, flowers I must say a bit disappointing after having waited the best part of 5 years for results. However its distant relatives the *Libertias* have been superb even the tiny *Libertia pulchella*, flowered for the first time, which together with *L. grandiflora* and *L. caerulea* provided an interesting springtime display. The latter an unusual shade of blue irid flowers that last for only a day but are born in repeat succession.



Clianthus puniceus

Clianthus puniceus 'Kaka King' has been with us in the new house for only two winters, despite ravaging winds last winter which spoilt much of the fresh foliage, the flowers did not disappoint and it now stands at 2 x 2 m. A white form produced from seed will be cosseted through this winter and planted in a NW facing border to complement the other creams and yellow spring time flowers. Both flowered to produce seed this year outside.

Astelia nervosa 'Westland' has made a fine specimen after several years. It looked like an alpine when purchased it was so small. It seems very hardy in a pot and is due for planting outside in the Spring of 2006.

Although a non Australasian species, this year I have been forced to plant out the *Plumbago capensis*, it is too difficult to keep in a pot as it gets too big, but goes dormant even under glass for the winter. Beloved of butterflies planted outside it has made 1metre of growth this season and is still smothered in flowers at the beginning of October. It is reputedly hardy to -8°C so the sunny south west facing corner is its home for now and I await with anticipation how it fairs through what is forecast to be a hard winter.

Came across some old seed last year of kangaroo paw *Anigozanthos* spp, these came up like mustard and cress but appear to be all the same species, flowering late summer with a red outer colour and apricot interior.

My Dicksonia treatment continues to produce results. My specimen was purchased in a 4 inch pot from a National Trust garden in Cornwall in 1995. It now stands with a 60cm trunk topped with a mass of 1.5 m fronds.

Technique:

I. Protect from wind, but not from sun.

II. Purchase as a small plant a container, therefore it has never been cut as the trunks imported from Oz have, thereby loosing valuable fibrous roots.

III. Build up size eventually to plant in a large container.

IV. A rubber black rubble carrier with holes made (sort of DIY thing) with mass capacity, is ideal, water drains slowly.

V. In summer a hose pipe is essential especially if a fine mist can be achieved, particularly in the evening.

VI. A feed of tomato fertiliser, weak but frequent seems to promote more fronds and larger ones.

VII. In winter severe weather wrap the trunk with bubble wrap and occasionally wheel into the garage!

VIII. If those fronds can be prevented from being lost then the advantage comes in the spring when early photosynthesis and protection from last year's fronds (which are never removed until they are brown) will have promoted a plethora of new ones.

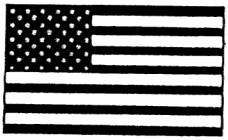
IX. Warning watch for the late spring frosts!

'Ardy Aloes'

On a last note; been trying a number of South African *Aloe* spp from seed.

Aloe reitzii, Aloe striatula, both planted out in a v. dry sunny site *Aloe cooperi* next spring. Also watch out for *Cotyledon orbiculata sub* spp. *orbiculata* amazing dusty grey paddle leaves. All the above are reputedly hardy to between -7 and -12C watch this space.

Helen Beaufort-Murphy continues her series of articles about her gardening experiences around the world.



Letters from America #4, October 2005.

The Weather during the winter of 2004-05 and spring, summer and fall of '05.

The winter of 04-05 was unusually mild for this area of North Carolina, with only one or two light snowfalls and one minor ice storm, although cold, below freezing temperatures lasted much later into the spring than usual. And because of the mild winter this area was inundated with hordes of plant chewing insects during the summer. In addition to which, we had several weeks of 100F plus temperatures (with heat indexes of 115-120F) in July and August, and no rain whatsoever from August 9th to October 5th. Fortunately however, we have had over 4" of rain during the last 8 days (as of October 14th). However, between the insects and lack of rain a lot of trees and shrubs have died throughout this region.

Meanwhile, due to circumstances beyond my control, I was unable to do as much gardening as I hoped to do this year. Because I managed to get a small fracture in my right wrist (in April) while trying to dig up a small dead tree in the front lawn, the roots of which proved to be tougher than my wrist. So between a brace, then a cast followed by another brace (each from finger tips to elbow) I was very restricted in what I was able to do for over 3 months.

Compost for Seed Sowing. I had sown seeds of a lot of (non-Australasian) hardy perennials in February and March (before I hurt my wrist) with the intention of sowing the more tender Australasian species in April. However that was postponed until later in the summer (see following table and notes) and for the most part I had very good results with both seed germination and seedling survival. People often ask me for more details about my composts and seed sowing methods so this article will expand on these matters. The seeds were sown in my usual compost of a 1-1-1 mix of rehydrated coir, vermiculite and granite chips. A 'batch' of compost is made with 1 'brick' of dehydrated coir placed in about 3 gallons of

very hot water (in a 5 gallon bucket) and left to soak overnight. This is more than the recommended amount of water but it ensures that the coir is thoroughly rehydrated and is very wet when I mix it with the vermiculite and granite. A 'brick' of dry coir provides 3 gallons or more of moist organic material when rehydrated and is mixed with 3 gallons (each) of vermiculite and granite chips. Both vermiculite and granite are usually extremely dry and dusty when purchased so the excess moisture in the rehydrated coir eliminates the dust, and by the time the ingredients are completely mixed the compost is evenly moist and fluffy and just right for sowing seeds. The plastic wrapped, dehydrated coir bricks are made by Gro Brix of Ontario, Canada. Each brick measures 8" L x 4" W x 2" D and weighs (628g). A dry brick takes up very little storage space and lasts a very long time in the dehydrated state; as compared to the large bags of moist coir usually sold in garden centres. The granite chips (from 1/8th to 1/4" in length with very sharp edges) that are purchased from a farmer's feed store as 'Turkey Grit' are much less expensive than 'horticulture' grit. In addition to which, grit sold as 'horticultural grit' in this area is often ground up oyster shell straight from the coast so the salt in it would be disastrous for most plant species. Unfortunately I usually have to buy builders vermiculite because horticultural grade vermiculite is hard to obtain in this area.

Seeds are sown in 2.5 x 2.5" square, black plastic pots that are filled with compost, placed in a tray and drenched with a deep-rose (coloured) solution of Potassium Permanganate and water and left to soak for an hour or two before sowing the seeds. The pots of seeds are kept in a 'bog' condition with an inch of water in the tray until germination takes place, except for moisture requiring species, which are maintained in a 'bog' tray until ready to plant out in the garden. If mold starts to form on any of the seeds I water the individual pot with a small amount of Potassium Permanganate solution through a fine rose on a small watering can.

Compost for Transplanting Seedlings. This year I transplanted my seedlings into a compost of 1-1-1-1 of Coir, Vermiculite, Granite chips, Topsoil plus 2 1/2oz of a Mycorrhizal Fungi inoculant mixture per 12 gallons of compost. As mentioned in a previous article, the 'soil' in this area is red clay and very low in nutrients due to overgrazing and constant removal of native trees, which in conjunction with heavy rains, led to the erosion of the original topsoil. As also

mentioned before, there is a lack of Mycorrhizal Fungi in the soil in this area so farmers have to use Myco Fungal inoculants in order to grow soybeans. Unfortunately this inoculant is Soybean specific and is only sold in large quantities, so it is not suitable for home gardeners. But until recently I did not have a source from which to obtain a Myco fungi inoculant suitable for a wide range of ornamental plant species and in small enough quantities for the home gardener. Then, while browsing through the Internet early this spring, I came across Horticultural Alliance Inc. This company produces a number of Myco Fungal mixtures, in units small enough for the home gardener and large enough for commercial landscapers. The various mixes include an Ericoid Root Dip mix developed especially for planting Ericaceous species and a general Transplant Mix, that contains both endo and ecto type Myco Fungi as well as Nitrogen fixing Bacteria, and was formulated for use with a very wide range of ornamental plant species. All of their Myco mixes contain a wetting gel to help maintain moisture in the soil as well as to make the 'Root Dip' mix thicken. I used both the Ericoid Root Dip mix and the Transplant Mix this year with excellent results. The Ericoid mix sells for $29.99 per 1 lb, but it only took 3/4oz of the mix in a pint of water to dip 6 Heather plants (from 3" pots) (or 5oz per gallon), so it is very economical to use. The Transplant mix is $5.95 for 8oz and I use 2 1/2oz of it per 12gallon batch of potting compost, so it is also very economical to use.

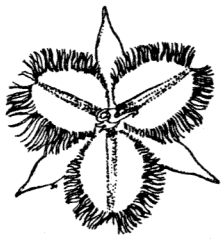
Despite the adverse weather and hordes of insects this has been an unusually good year for seed germination. In addition to the plant species listed below I grew some 40 different species of non-Australasian perennials from seed this year with excellent germination and seedling survival with the majority of species. In addition, the seedlings grown with the Transplant Myco Mix survived and grew quicker and healthier than those grown without the mix in previous years. I also obtained an excellent rate of survival and growth with the Heathers that I planted this spring with the Ericoid Root Dip, unlike previous attempts when I usually lost the majority of Heather plants, regardless of the type of soil I planted them in. I realize that many English gardeners may not have problems with the lack of Myco Fungi or Nitrogen fixing Bacteria, but for those who do have these problems may I highly recommend the above products. The contact is: Mr. Jim Quinn, Horticultural Alliance Inc,

1550, 66th Avenue Drive East, Sarasota, Florida 34243, USA. Or the Web Page is: http://www.horticulturalalliance.com

Seed sowing, germination, transplanting during 2005, as of October 13th

Source of seeds = place/date obtained; APS = Australasian Plant Society; CS = Chiltern Seed; UH = a friend. The dates are in US manner i.e., 8/15 is August 15th. Blank spaces under germ and trans indicate no germination or transplanting as of October 13th, 2005.

Species	source	sown	germ	trans	notes
Alyogyne huegelii	APS05	8/15	9/21		1 small seedling
Anthoceris littorea	CS01	8/15			
Arthropodium candidum	APS01	8/15			
Arthropodium cirrhatum	APS01	8/15	8/25		excellent germination
Arthropodium milleflorum	APS01	8/15			
Arthropodium strictum	APS01	8/15	10/12		
Blandfordia grandiflora	APS00	8/15			
Blandfordia punicea	APS01	8/15			
Boronia citrodora	APS05	10/2			pre-sowing soak
Calomeria amaranthoides	APS05	8/15	9/18		sparse germination
Carpobrotus rossii	APS05	8/15	8/19		excellent germination
Clematis sp	APS05	8/15			
Diplarrena latifolia	APS05	8/16			
Eucalyptus laophila	APS05	8/16	8/28		2 seedlings
Eucalyptus vernicosa	APS05	8/16	8/24		1 seedling
Melaleuca thymifolia	APS05	8/16	8/22		excellent germination
Pandorea pandorana	APS05	8/16			
Sollya heterophylla (pink)	APS05	8/16			
Sollya heterophylla (blue)	APS05	8/16			
Stypandra glauca	APS05	10/2			
Thysanotus dichotomus	APS05	10/2			
Thysanotus multilflorus	APS05	10/2			
Thysanotus pattersonii	APS04	10/2			
Thysanotus thrysoides	APS05	10/2			



Thysanotus multiflorus
Many-flowered fringed lily

Herbaceous plant growing to 45cm high. The fringed flowers are blue-mauve, about 25mm across.



Stypandra glauca
Nodding Blue-Lily

Australian member of the lily family

Australasian legume species

Acacia acinacea	APS01	10/2		
Acacia costiniana	APS02	10/2		
Acacia buxifolium	APS01	10/2		
Acacia sp. Col. Yemen '97	APS05	10/2	10/6	2 from 4 seeds
Carmichaelia monroi	APS05	10/2	10/7	excellent germination
Clianthus puniceus (red)	APS01	10/2	10/11	excellent germination
Clianthus puniceus (alba)	APS01	10/2	10/11	excellent germination
Crotalaria cunninghamii	APS99	10/2	10/12	
Kennedia rubicunda	APS99	10/2		
Viminalis juncea	APS00	10/2	10/13	

Species from the Southern Hemisphere but not Australasia

Acnistus australis	CS99	8/15	8/27	10/8	S. America. Excellent germ.
Bomarea caldasii	CS00	8/15			S. America
Bomarea salsilla	CS01	8/15			S. America
Melasphaerula ramosa	CS01	8/16	9/16		S. Africa. Excellent germ
Mutisia spinosa	APS05		8/16	8/30	Chile. 1 seedling
Passiflora antioquiensis	CS99	7/26	8/8	8/25	Columbia, S. Amer. 100% g
Pelargonium oblongatum	UH05	8/16	8/29	9/12	S. Africa. 100% g
Sandersonia aurantica	CS03	8/16			Natal

Several years ago, Pat Anderson wrote about his experience of growing *Thysanotus multiflorus*. The following is a summary of what he did and achieved.

A pot was filled to within 2cm of the top with moist sandy soil, which was wetted thoroughly and compressed. Seed was thinly sown and covered with a thin layer of soil. 7cm of dry leaves was placed on top and set alight. Unburnt pieces were removed. Pot was watered well, covered with clear polythene, and placed in a warm shaded position.

To compensate for the lack of naturally-occurring mycorrhizas, Pat mixed a teaspoonful of subsoil from a patch of lawn clover, into the compost used for transplanting the seedlings. Five seedlings went into each of two x 10" pots. As well as the the clover underlay, one pot got an additional ingredient : a small amount of soil from a pot containing a *Eucalyptus pauciflora.*

Good growth resulted. Winter was spent in an unheated greenhouse. In April, one pot was placed outside. By late May some flower buds had appeared, between four and 16 on each of four stems. It was almost two months before the first flower opened, early one morning, only to shrink and close by 3pm! The rest of the flowers did the same over a period of days. Despite its brief life, each flower is a stunner : deep purple petals with pink/lilac fringes, a white centre and black stamens.

HAS ANYONE ELSE HAD EXPERIENCE OF GROWING THE FRINGED LILY?

Notes on some of the above species.

As can be seen from the above table some of the seeds were sown in July and August, others were only sown about a week ago. *Arthropodium cirrhatum* started to germinate ten days after sowing and the seeds are still germinating, I would guess they are now close to 100% germinated. The species listed with 'excellent germination' also have close to 100% germination. The seedlings of *Melaleuca thymifolia* are very, very tiny (as small or smaller than the Gesneriads on which I did some of my graduate research) and I was not sure when to transplant them? But they now have 2 pairs of leaves so I plan to transplant some of them and see how they do.

I was already interested in growing the various species of *Blandfordia*, and after reading Dennis Rowlinson's interesting article on the genus I am even more anxious to see the seeds germinate. I was especially looking forward to seeing how the seeds of the 4 *Thysanotus species* would do this year, but my accident prevented them from being sown until recently, so I will have to wait and see if and when they germinate.

I usually sow the seeds of similar types of species together, as for instance the Legumes. I sanded the seeds of each legume species between 2 pieces of fine sandpaper, but I did not soak them, as I'd recently read that this could tend to increase the occurrence of mold. So because of the high temperatures this summer I decided to just scarify the seeds. I was delighted when several of the legume species germinated so quickly, especially the 2 varieties of *Clianthus puniceus*, which I plan to move into 2 bigger pots, in a group so as not to disturb the roots, and hope that I am able to keep them going. I would definitely be very excited to actually get them to flowering size. One packet of this year's seeds from APS was labelled "*Acacia sp.* Collected in Yemen in '97". Two seeds germinated 2 days after sowing and are now growing quite rapidly so I would very much like to know which species it is, and would very much appreciate it if the member who collected it would let me know the name of the species, if possible?

Species from the Southern Hemisphere but not Australasia:

Seedlings of *Acnistus australis* are growing rapidly and I hope to see flowers next year. I read that seeds of *Passiflora antioquiensis* germinate readily at temperatures over 100F! So I quickly sowed them during our hot spell, and sure enough up they came (100%) and

are now transplanted and growing rapidly. *Pelargonium oblongatum* is a tuberous rooted, scented, yellow species brought back from Africa by a friend, it also germinated 100%, is transplanted and growing rapidly. On the other hand I have only 1 seedling of *Mutisia spinosa* that is growing very, very slowly. Although in past years I did not get any germination at all with the species of this genus, are these common traits for the species of this genus?

Mature Plants

My bulb of *Calostemma purpurea* flowered in August, a week later than last year, but was still very beautiful. *Pandorea jasminoides* started to flower in July, a month later than last year, but has not had anywhere near the amount of flowers it had last year. On the other hand the high spot of the summer was a group of 7 or 8 bulbs that I'd bought 2 years ago as *Hymenocallis littorallis*, and planted out each summer and dug up and taken in each winter. Then, when they flowered this July, they turned out to be *Hymenocallis amancaes*! They were in flower for 2 weeks, highly fragrant and absolutely breathtakingly beautiful. The species is a very rare native of the Lomas (or Fog Valleys) along the northern coast of Peru. I'd often looked for them on my various trips up and down the coast but had never been lucky enough to see any of them. So I was amazed to find that I had some of them when they flowered. Gardening certainly does have its rewards occasionally! Although I do regret not knowing anyone over here with whom I can share my love of growing plants.

Ed: Helen can be contacted on helen_beaufortmurphy@yahoo.com



Snippet

The Times reports that an Italian vineyard owner has reported better growth, earlier fruit and less pests after he had for 4 years played Mozart and Tchaikovsky all day to his vines. This has so impressed Florence University that they are setting up a controlled trial. So here is an idea - how about playing Rolf Harris on his didgeridoo to your Australian?

Can you contribute to the APS seedlist? Contact Richard Christmas - see contacts inside back cover.

Xeronema callistemon

By Greg Plenty

Getting things to flower: a success

The last time we held an APS meeting at my house, here in West Yorkshire, about three years ago, Thomas Naylor kindly gave me a seedling (I think) of a plant that I had been seeking a long time after first seeing it in a 'coffee table' gardening book some 20 years ago.

The plant was *Xeronema callistemon*. It was a nice size, filling a five inch plastic pot I seem to remember. However, it was not particularly attractive to look at! It appeared as a sort of cross between a small bearded iris and a tiny Phormium. The rootstock and leaf bases seemed to be covered in tufts of dead material.

It grew quite well under my conditions so two years ago, in the spring, I repotted it into a nine inch clay pot. Would it ever flower?

I'd only ever seen a plant of this specie once before, in the temperate house at Kew Gardens. There was no sign that it had ever flowered there even though it looked a lot healthier than mine.

I'd read somewhere that Xeronema thrives on neglect. But I'm always rather sceptical of this view of any plant as all plants need certain basic conditions to grow and reproduce. However, I've so many plants that individuals tend to be ignored at times and so it was with the Xeronema. It sat in the greenhouse, not always in the lightest spot, enduring temperatures reaching at least 35°C in the summer down to about 1°C in the winter. At times it became very dry indeed as I never stood it in a saucer so as to retain water and was only irrigated by overhead means - the watering can.

Then last April I noticed a change in the nature of the leaves. A thickening was beginning to appear in several of them as you see in irises and Phormiums. It was plain to see that it was about to flower.

Very slowly the flower shoots began to emerge so that by the time of the AGM in Sheffield Botanic Garden it was in full flower and just as fantastic as I had hoped. I proudly put it on display at the back of the hall and it seemed to attract much interest.

As we were leaving the meeting I was approached by a young man

dressed as if off to a wedding. He was, for it turned out that he was the garden curator and he was organising just such an event in the garden's wonderful conservatory that afternoon. He expressed his amazement at the plant, stating that he had never seen one before. He was so complementary that I wasn't quick enough to point out to him that, not ten feet from where we were standing, was, I think, a large Xeronema, rather overshadowed by other Australasians, in the conservatory!

The flower spikes lasted for some time and copious seed was set that will be going to our list.

It's been standing outside all summer and will go into the greenhouse in November.

Last week I returned to the temperate house at Kew. Their Xeronema is still looking very healthy - but neither does it look as though it's flowered!

(See the front cover for a colour illustration of *Xeronema callistemon*).

Getting things to flower: a failure

About seven years ago I went to County Park Nurseries in Essex and was easily tempted by the many unusual plants that Graham Hutchins had to offer.

I had picked up one or two super things whence my eyes alighted on *Banksia marginata*. I bought three at a very reasonable price and grew them on. They seemed very easy to grow, although they are a bit slow, and have never been damaged by the weather in West Yorkshire. We always get about -10°C here at some time in the winter.

They have an interesting form but I cannot get them to flower. Last summer I visited a friend of mine in Barnsley whose plant was about six feet high and flowering very well in a dryish fairly shady spot. Could it be a different clone? I have to admit that the flowers are not really very showy but at least they could try to pay the rent.

As I mentioned, I bought three of these plants but now have only two. As I'm writing this I'm wondering if I gave a plant to Richard in Barnsley (my memory's failing!) so that would probably destroy the different clone theory.

If nothing happens next year, I think they'll have to go - or have you any ideas?

As part of the RHS Lecture "Plants from 'Down Under'", held in March this year, Jeff Irons produced the following article.

SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIAN PLANTS

Where Australian Native Plants Can Be Seen

Outside the main cities every road is bordered by native plants, even in agricultural areas. They are so plentiful that in order to make reasonable progress car drivers need to make a rule to stop only once every half hour! As an example of what can be seen, the curious visitor to the Australian Alps will notice some small grey weeping eucalypts between Adaminaby and Berriedale. They are *Eucalyptus lacrimans*, a recent arrival in the Plant Finder both under its own name and as E. *pauciflora ssp. niphophila* 'Pendula'. All National Parks are unspoilt country. Abandoned mine workings are usually good places to see native plants as are forest roads. Although winter and spring are the best times to see flowers there is something in bloom all year round. Wattles peak in early spring.

Some Specific Areas:

New South Wales/Australian Capital Territory

Concentrate on the higher portions of the country from west of Sydney down to the Victorian border. Any of the standard tourist trails in the Blue Mountains will yield plants in bloom. The easy Grand Canyon walk is recommended. Narrow Neck is also a good spot. From the prostrate *Grevillea laurifolia* where it turns off from The Bell, the road to Mount Wilson is bordered by interesting plants. On Mount Wilson itself, walk the North Fire Trail. Glen Davis, a little to the west, is another good spot for plants as is the Kanangra-Boyd National Park. Further south the Deua National Park is readily accessible. Thredbo is a good base for exploration of the Alps and one chairlift is open in summer. The best time for alpine flowers is between November (can still be snowy) and February. Just south of Moss Vale the Fitzroy Falls have an excellent Visitor Centre. In the ACT visit Namadgi National Park.

Victoria

Every visitor to Melbourne should go to the Dandenongs. A little further away, the Grampians can be sampled by a stay at Halls Gap and a walk to The Balconies. Those with more time should go to the Major Mitchell Plateau. The Dargile Forest, near Heathcote, has many excellent plants. Not

on the standard tourist itinerary, the sub-alpine Baw-Baw plateau should be on everyone's list. Visitors to Hanging Rock will find Mount Macedon, not far away, to be a plant-lovers' Mecca. Lake Mountain, 58 miles from Melbourne and Falls Creek are also good bases.

Tasmania

Hobart lies at the foot of the 4166ft Mount Wellington. A short bus ride from Hobart to The Springs takes one to the start of one of the many walks to the top of Mount Wellington. Alternatively it is possible to drive to the summit, park and explore the vegetation. At this level November to January are the best times for a visit; remember though that snow can fall in any month. Mount Field National Park is the only place where all the cushion plants can be seen. The Tasman Peninsula has many species not found elsewhere in the State. On the east coast the walk to the top of Mount Mason at Freycinet Peninsula may give the opportunity to see dendrobiums in bloom. Coastal plants abound and the less active visitor will find much of interest at Sisters Beach in north-west Tasmania.

Public Gardens

The Botanic Gardens in Hobart, Melbourne and Sydney cultivate only a small proportion of native plants. The RBG Melbourne has a native plant annexe at Cranbrook. Its plantings include many Western Australian Proteaceae. Normally unsuitable for Victoria, they grow in pure sand and some self-seed. The RBG Sydney has two annexes. That at Mount Annan grows a wide range of native plants. Apart from a small area of its early planting, the Mount Tomah annexe is devoted to cool climate plants of the southern hemisphere. The Australian National Botanic Gardens contain only native plants. Although devoted to exotic rhododendrons, Bacchante Gardens (Blackheath, Blue Mountains) is surrounded by native vegetation.

Although a tropical area that is outside the scope of the seminar, visitors to central Queensland should not miss the 30ha Kershaw Gardens (there are also some native plants in the Botanic Gardens) in Rockhampton.

Short List of Gardens Containing only Native Plants:

Australian Capital Territory
Australian National Botanic Gardens, Clunies, Ross Street, Black Mountain (90ha)

New South Wales
Burrendong Arboretum, Mumbil (near Wellington) (167ha), over 2000 species, 50000 plants.

Eurobodalla Native Gardens, Batemans Bay (42ha). open Wednesday.

Glenbrook Native Plant Reserve, (Lower Blue Mountains) (2ha), open Wed, Sat, Sun, pm.

Jervis Bay Botanic Gardens, Cave Beach Road, Jervis Bay, (80ha), closed Sunday.

Mount Annan Botanic Garden, Mount Annan Drive, Mount Annan (near Campbelltown, south of Sydney) (410ha).



Billardiera longiflora

Otherwise known as the Purple Appleberry, *Billardiera longiflora* is a twining shrub with wiry stems. The flowers, produced in spring, are greenish-yellow, sometimes tipped with purple, bell-shaped and 1-3cm long. There are five stamens, the anthers of which are blue. Occasionally they protrude the petals. In late summer and autumn, purple-blue fruits are produced.

In 2001 Sue Kohler, a Sheffield member mentioned that she had a Purple Appleberry growing on a north wall, where it had happily survived for years, hauling itself up an old *Jasminum officinale*. It can also be grown in a conservatory.

Mount Tomah Botanic Garden, Bells Line of Road. (about 2hrs drive west from Sydney)
(31ha) plus 186ha of reserve.

Victoria

Emu Creek Arboretum, Vahland Road, Emu Creek (near Bendigo) (8.3ha).

Euroa Arboretum, Old Hume Highway, Euroa (27ha), extensive wetlands.

Karwarra Native Plant Gardens, Mount Dandenong Tourist Road, Kalorama (2ha), open Tues-Fri 11-4, Sat-Sun 1-4.

Maranoa Gardens, Parring Road, Balwyn (2.6 ha), open Mon-Fri 7.30-4, Sat-Sun 1-5.

Books

Ross & Irons (1997). ***Australian Plants for European Gardens;*** published privately, available from RHS bookshop

Edited by P. McMillan Browse (2004). ***Gardening on the Edge;*** publisher Alison Hodge

Websites

anzplantsoc.org.uk Website of the Australasian Plant Society

anbg.gov.au/anbg/ Home page of the Australian National Botanic Garden that links to other facets, *e.g.* societies, seed suppliers, World Wide Wattle, Virtual Herbarium, Plant Name Index

Plants from South-eastern Australia with an RHS AGM

- *Acacia baileyana, baileyana* 'Purpurea', *dealbata, paradoxa, retinodes.*
- *Billardiera longiflora*
- *Blechnum penna-marina*
- *Callistemon citrinus, salignus*

- *Correa alba* 'Pinkie', *backhouseana, reflexa,* 'Marian's Marvel'
- *Derwentia* (as *Parahebe) perfoliata*
- *Dicksonia antarctica*
- *Eucalyptus dalrympleana, gunnii, parvifolia, pauciflora* subsp. *niphophila*
- *Grevillea* 'Canberra Gem', *rosmarinifolia*
- *Hardenbergia violacea*
- *Hibbertia scandens*
- *Leptospermum rupestre,* 'Silver Sheen'
- *Ozothamnus ledifolius, rosmarinifolius* 'Silver Jubilee'
- *Prostanthera cuneata, rotundifolia* 'Rosea'

Trip to Netherlands

Nicky Zanen

I am planning an excursion to visit APS member Liesbeth Uijtewaal in Neer, south east Holland for the spring bank holiday (end of May 2006). Dependent on the number of interested people, we could either go by ferry with an overnight stay at Hoek van Holland, or fly over.

The itinerary is still very open, but includes visits to Rhulenhof and the garden of Theo Kuypers. Theo has a very interesting garden featuring a magnificent magnolia tree and flummoxed me on my first visit when I saw a *Eucalyptus caesia* growing out of the ground. Impossible in a place that has such high frosts, and indeed this is so - it was still in its pot and is overwintered in Theo's hothouse.

Liesbeth and husband Bert live on an ex-dairy farm and have converted the milking shed and cowshed into hothouses. Liesbeth overwinters her plants in one and is working to create an indoor garden in the other. Her collection of Australian plants is awesome : with a strong emphasis on Proteaceae and Myrtaceae (and several correas). These will naturally be at their peak flowering time when we visit.

Liesbeth has been growing Aussies for over 11 years now, originally growing most from seeds where she would have to wait to see what flowers turned up. In recent years Liesbeth has been using cutting material sourced mainly from gardens in Victoria including Bob O'Neill's in Wandin. She also has some plants which originated from my garden in Melbourne, and each visit to her place is a sentimental journey for me.

Judy Clark from Hastings has indicated that she is interested in coming with me, and I invite anyone interested to contact me before 31 December so that I can build the plans around them.

I can be contacted on 07950 428 529 or by email - nicky.zanen@fsa.gov.uk.

'WE DON'T DO HALF-HEARTED'

THE GARDEN AT GORWELL HOUSE, BARNSTAPLE

Tim Longville

The south-west is the natural home of gardens pushing the boundaries of British hardiness and there seems to be an almost unending supply of them for the visitor to discover. One of the best, and least-known, I only discovered this spring.

Twenty-five years ago, before he was 30, John Marston, then a young doctor who had recently become a junior partner in a local practice, acquired part of a fine early nineteenth century linen-merchant's house on the outskirts of Barnstaple. It came with an impressive stone colonnade commanding views out over Barnstaple Bay, an acre of walled garden, and what was then a four acre bullock field. 'And I knew then that I was going to be here for the rest of my life.' Today, John is the practice's senior partner and is trying, not very successfully, to ease himself gently towards retirement. He is also the founder and conductor of, and keyboard-player with, a fine local amateur Baroque orchestra. And, in his 'free time,' he has turned that bullock field into a dramatic and already mature landscape garden full of improbable exotics, many of them Australasian but also with strong representations from the Far East and, particularly, from South America. (The garden is one of those involved in trialling Chilean species for the RBGE.)

South-facing, sloping (and now, courtesy of a friendly JCB, elaborately terraced), within sight of the sea yet not within easy reach of salt-laden gales, with free-draining soil fertilised by generations of its previous occupants, the site is almost ideal. Frost is rare and hardly ever more than light ('The ground here *never* freezes,' says John), while in summer the garden gets all the sun and heat that North Devon can provide. Those considerable advantages have been added to by hedges of shrubs and avenues of trees, which combine to break the force of the wind and provide additionally sheltered micro-climates. John says that his aim has been to use 'Lots of plants within a formal scheme' and the garden's style is a bizarre but

beautiful hybrid between the restraint of the English landscape park (Dartington has been a particularly strong influence) and melodramatic Mediterranean bravura. (His mother was Lebanese and one of the first trees he planted twenty-five years ago was a Cedar of Lebanon, in her honour. The rate of growth here is so rapid that what was then a tiny sapling is now a massive spreading specimen, at least 40ft tall and wide.) As non-plant examples of that hybridization, consider the garden's population of vista-stoppers. That population doesn't just involve common-or-garden statues (though it has those in plenty). There are also two classical temples, the first of which, created almost as soon as the garden was begun, John describes wryly as looking for years 'Like a khazi or bus-shelter,' until the trees and shrubs around it became mature enough to provide a suitable setting. There is a grotto, the shellwork by John himself, which 'Took me the whole of one summer.' And the *pièce de resistance* is a mighty metal Turkish tent, painted a dramatic deep blue, backed by a hedge of red prunus, and with a bed of red-flowered dark-foliaged dahlias in front! That jaw-dropping and eye-watering sight, the visitor's reaction to which John slyly watches out for and welcomes with a chuckle, was what led to his apt one sentence summary of his garden and its style: 'We don't do half-hearted here!'



Metrosideros umbellata
Southern Rata.

Commonly found on the New Zealand's South Island, particularly on the wetter west coast. The flowers, with their conspicuous stamens, are a vivid red. The leaves have fine gland-dots which are visible to the naked eye. These contain fragrant oils which are released when the leaf is crushed.

Mere plant-lists can easily become boring, even for enthusiasts, but a few samples from the garden's packed suitcase of contents will at least give an indication of the richness, variety and rarity of its many semi-tender plants. I'll concentrate on the Australasians, but not exclusively, since that wouldn't be fair either to the garden or, I'm sure, to many members' range of interests.

The beds inside and outside the walls of the old walled garden have been used to provide particularly sheltered homes, and the plants here are planted very

closely, so that in maturity they form a dense jungle, 'To protect each other.' Among those which caught my eye were several flourishing furcraeas, a massive *Cordyline indivisa*, a fine *Metrosideros umbellata*, the myrtle relative *Tristaniopsis laurina*, several clumps of *Cyrtanthus* from South Africa, gifts from Martyn Rix, good specimens of *Lomatia ferruginea* and *Richea dracophylla*, both of which were in flower when I visited, two handsome scramblers, *Hibbertia aspera* and *Bomarea lancifolia* (from Ecuador), and a *Melanoselinum* species, an impressive rare umbellifer from the gullies of Madeira. There were also several plants I can't find in any of my reference books. My notebook claims that John said one shrub, in the most sheltered inside border, was an *Electryon* and that it came from New Zealand, but I can find no trace of any such creature. Does anyone know (of) it? Or did I mishear - and can anyone intuit what I misheard for?! John was also particularly pleased with the success of what he said was a relative of the daphnes, *Wixtonia unigemmata*, but the IPNI refuses to admit its existence. Again, can anyone help?

In what is now the main garden, it would be impossible to list in less than a full-length book all the rarities. Main groups, at least, certainly include palms (at least ten different species, including *Butia capitata* and *B. yatay*, all flourishing without protection), michelia, podocarpus,

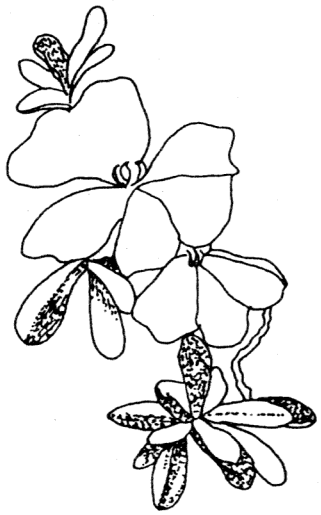


Richea dracophylla

A tasmanian endemic. One of those plants commonly called 'architectural' because of its spirally-arranged, sharply-pointed long leaves. The white flowers are produced in large terminal spikes.

and pittosporum. (I was particularly taken with what John said was a Chinese species named *P. yunnanensis*, with striking yellow flowers, but, again, I can't find it in any of my reference books.) There are also a good many banksias, such as *B. serrata* (12 feet tall after 8 years) and *B. montana* (a gift from the International Dendrological Society, thanks for their visit to the garden). Near to that last was a

Carmichaelia odorata, a 7-year-old bush 5ft high and across, absolutely smothered in its purple flowers. In the same area, a *Pomaderris elliptica* (10 feet tall after 8 years) strove to outdo the carmichaelia by being if anything even more smothered in its yellow flowers. Neither showed the least sign of ever having been damaged.



Hibbertia aspera

Although this shrub has an upright habit, its long sprawling branches climb through and over other plants. Flowers are yellow. Found in Tasmania and Victoria.

In this central and most open area of the garden, where many of the garden's most choice specimens are deployed, I want to mention one non-Australasian shrub I fell in love with: an unusual euphorbia relative, *Mallotus japonicus*, which has seriously handsome foliage – but is apparently also seriously tender. If you're tempted, though, as I certainly am, Shirley Clemo sells it at Pine Lodge, and Bleddyn Wynne-Jones offers an unidentified collector's-number-only species from the genus at Crûg Farm.

The lower levels of the garden, which are shadier and damper but also more sheltered from wind, contain weird plants as well as the weird Turkish tent! Here for instance can be found the odd Tasmanian conifer, *Arthrotaxus cupressoides*, as well as (odd only in not just surviving but flourishing) a 12-foot-tall specimen of *Telopea mongaensis*, in full spectacular flower at the time of my visit. (I'm lucky enough to have seen this flowering in two different British gardens, since an even larger specimen was performing in Edward Needham's garden at Happy Valley in Cornwall when I visited it a couple of years ago.)

And right at the bottom of the garden, below the second shining white classical temple (complete with its accompanying statue of Pan! Remember, 'We don't do half-hearted'!), is a fernery where, among tree ferns (not just any old tree ferns, of course: *Cyathea dealbata* is an

unprotected long-term success here), *Philesia magellanica* happily sports and plays.

I want to end, though, by emphasising that what is so impressive about this garden is that it is not a mere rag-bag assemblage of rarities which struggle just to survive. In the first place, rare and tender plants don't just survive here. They flourish. They look healthy, they grow quickly, they flower vigorously. In the second place, they are consciously and cleverly used as part of an overall scheme. This is a garden, and a beautiful one, not just a collection for collection's sake. So plants are positioned in ways which reconcile two not easily reconciled criteria. The position has to suit the plant, and give it its best chance. But it also has to suit the garden, and make it look its best.

As if that weren't enough of an inspiration, consider this. John has fairly recently planted a *Pinus bungeana*, whose whole point is its wonderful piebald bark. But that bark is only produced when the tree is mature, and since it is very slow-growing that maturity is something 'I shall be very lucky to see.' However, he added – and for once there wasn't the least hint of a smile; indeed, there was even a certain fierceness – 'You have to garden as though you'll live for ever.'

Note

The garden opens on one day in summer for the NGS but I'm sure interested visitors would be welcomed if they wrote to make an appointment. Remember, though, that John is a GP, conductor, and harpsichord-player, as well as a committed gardener, while his wife Veronica is a well-known and busy sculptor, so their lives are extremely full and their free time extremely limited: so write well in advance.

Wollemi Pine

Eleven years ago, while out bush walking in Wollemi National Park, NSW, David Noble, a field officer with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, noticed a grove of about 40 trees which he did not recognise.

This northern-most part of the Greater Blue Mountains area is a relatively fire-free area about 200km from Sydney. The small grove ranged from seedlings to mature trees growing on west ledges in a deep sheltered rainforest. The tree was given the everyday name 'Wollemi Pine'.

The 'Wollemi Pine' is a conifer

growing to a height of 35-40km with a trunk diameter of over one metre. The bark is very distinctive, brown, knobbly and cork-like, leading to the name "Coco Pops". The foliage has three phases ranging from bright lime green in the juvenile form to an attractive apple green at maturity. The bisexual trees carry both bright green female cones and brown cylindrical male ones on the upper branches. The seeds are winged.

Investigations at the RBG Sydney using DNA testing and scanning electron microscopy show the Pine to belong to the family Araucariaceae. Other Australasian members of this family include the Hoop Pine and Norfolk Island Pine as well as the Kauri Pine of NZ. The Wollemi Pine has been named *Wollemia nobilis*. Its closest relatives are fossils from the Cretaceous and early Tertiary periods about 100 million years ago. Indeed, fossils with somewhat similar features occurred in the Jurassic as long ago as 150 million years ago.

On October 23 2005, at Sotherby's Sydney, an auction was held for the First Generation Collectors Edition Wollemi Pine. 292 trees were up for sale, all grown from the original cuttings taken from the wild population. Now upto 6 years of age, they are upto 2.5m tall.

The auction was a resounding success. All 292 trees were sold and over A$1,000,000 was raised. As well as funding the conservation of the Wollemi Pine, proceeds from the auction have been donated to various conservation organisations including the RBG Sydney and RBG Kew.

The highlight of the auction was the "Sir Joseph Banks Collection", a selection of 15 trees, each tree grown from one of the 15 original trees in the wild from which cuttings were taken. This lot realised A$150,000.

The average price for a single tree was A$3,600.

A range of smaller Wollemi Pine pot plants will be available from April 2006 at selected garden centres, online and via mail and phone order.

Sue Hyams

Gardening in Cheshire

Tony Entwistle

Further notes on the germination of Proteaceae (an update on my report of last year).

Sown, as last year, end of May, in pots in the greenhouse in coarse sand/peat mixture, not "smoked" and without extra heat. Again, quick success with *Hakea* - 4 wks. Also *Leucospermum* and *Leucadendron* - 6 wks. But nothing at all this year from *Banksia, Dryandra* and *Grevillea*. But a further sowing of *Banksia* in my "hot-box" (bottom heat in a transparent plastic box, temp 35-45°C) gave good germination in 4 weeks, so presumably my initial temps were too low (it was not particularly warm at this time). One seedling of *Telopea* appeared but had a quick neonatal death. Mentioning non-Proteaceae, South African restios (*Elegia*) profusely after 10 weeks - both were "smoked" before sowing, on sphagnum.

A success this year, though far from Australia, was the survival after our quite mild winter of two plants of the Canarian triennial *Echium pininana*, which shot up huge 4m flowers spikes besieged by bees.

I lost only two Australian plants outdoors last winter - *Eucalyptus nicholsii* and *Grevillea victoriae*, and I am not even sure if it was frost that killed them.



Dear Editor

I joined APS in the Spring of 05. I am an over 80 year old with a small garden, heated greenhouse and conservatory.

I've been interested in growing plants from seed for about 30 years.

My interest in Australasian plants has been a consuming interest with a fair amount of loses along the way, I have to admit.

Acacias I find very rewarding, beautiful foliage and often flowering quite early. I have *Acacia drummondi* 'Elegans', growing from APS seed sown in the Spring. This one seems to be slow growing and very delicate (any advice or comments on this Acacia would be welcome).

As well as several Acacias, I also grow *Albizia, Cordyline, Casuarina*, Cycads, *Leptospermum, Melaleuca, Kunzea* and *Xanthorrhoea*.

More than half of my greenhouse is given over to cacti and succulents; I'm very interested in those too.

I have a lot of seed waiting to be sown, but finding the time and space is the problem!

Yours sincerely

Joan Noble

If anyone can help Joan with info on her acacia, please email sue.hyams@ic24.net

Comments on the Society's Seed List

There is no doubt that our seed list is valued by many members. It is worth pointing out that the total cost of purchasing seeds, packing etc. has always exceeded the cost of members' payment for seeds and is in part financed from general subscription, which I feel is as it should be.

From long previous experience with running seed lists for other societies I know that it is impossible to judge the demand for particular items (and therefore deciding what seeds to obtain). It would certainly help if members told Richard (seed manager) what they would like (preferably a year in advance): clearly he could not oblige individual demands but if there was some more collective demand I am sure he would try and oblige.

The range could be greater if more members were to send Richard any surplus seed from their own gardens, and it is worth stressing that this does not have to be Australasian - any seed which members feel is worth wider distribution - many of us are not exclusive Australasian purists!

Having said all this, my figures show that this year only just under 40% of our membership applied for seeds, which made me ponder why the majority do not.

There may be several reasons:- some members may not have a garden; - my commiserations - but for those who have, some may feel they have not the facilities for raising seed (unlikely, not even a pot and a plastic bag on the windowsill?); some may feel that the seeds are difficult to germinate and raise (true for some but surely true gardeners practice the quotation "if at first you don't succeed.....); or they may feel that it takes too long, and too much care, to get the plants to maturity (if you are already ancient, like me, remember that sowing something that will take

10 years or so is an excellent cure for longevity.)

Remember also the adage, "he who plants pears, plants for his heirs". Members who feel they have absolutely no more room in their garden for anything else (can any true gardener really think that?) should remember that surplus seedlings can be offered and are always welcomed by members, or indeed any keen gardener friend, or a nearby botanical institution - it gives me a lot of pleasure to see a plant in a public garden that I have provided.

There will be I suppose some members who only want "instant gardening" and only buy established plants - if they can find them. We all buy some plants at times, of course, but there is something very satisfying in saying "I grew this from seed".

So please have a go next year - it will cost you even less, only £2.

Tony Entwistle

Exchange & Mart

Tony Entwistle offers the following:
(5 only) rooted cuttings of *Trochetiopsis ebenus*; endangered St. Helena endemic, evergreen shrub with white mallow flowers; no frost.
Also seedlings of *Aristolochia clematitis* and *Rhododendron mucronulatum*.
All these are safer sent in March/April.

Please send 50p to cover p&p.

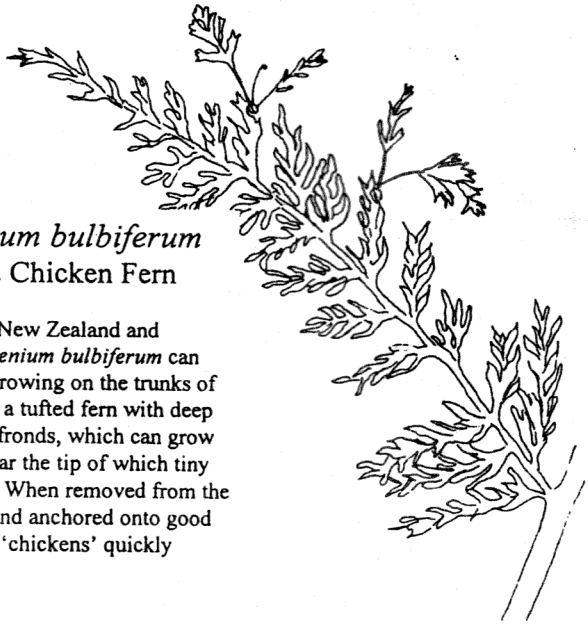
Seedlist 2006

To apply for a seedlist, send a SAE (at least 6" x 9") to:

RJ Christmas
Osborne House
Wrexham Road
Pen-y-ffordd
Chester
Flintshire CH4 0HT

An electronic version can be obtained by contacting - morayacacia@aol.com

The seedlist will be available from 31st March.



Asplenium bulbiferum
Hen & Chicken Fern

Found in both New Zealand and Australia, *Asplenium bulbiferum* can often be seen growing on the trunks of tree ferns. It is a tufted fern with deep green feathery fronds, which can grow to 1.2m tall, near the tip of which tiny plantlets arise. When removed from the mother 'hen', and anchored onto good compost, these 'chickens' quickly produce roots.

Frequently grown as a house plant, it is worth using as a summer hanging basket specimen in a shady, sheltered spot.

Other ferns useful for hanging basket/container culture include *Asplenium flabellifolium* the necklace fern, and *Davallia pyxidata* the Hare's Foot Fern. The necklace fern is so called because of its narrow fronds along which are arranged fan-shaped leaflets. The 30cm+ fronds are lax and flop over the ground. Where the tip touches the soil, a new plant forms. In all but the coldest areas of the UK, this fern should be hardy, provided it is protected from cold winter winds.

The Hare's Foot Fern is a well known fern with creeping rhizomes which is ideal for basket culture and looks particularly attractive in an 'orchid' slotted wooden basket. The thick and fleshy rhizomes are covered with brown papery scales, giving them the common name of hare's foot fern. This fern requires winter protection.

Microchipping tree ferns

Jeff Layman sent in the following snippet:

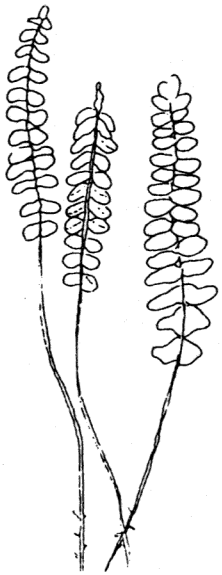
Ventnor Botanic Gardens, Isle of Wight, have had recent problems with thieves stealing large tree ferns. So they took some interesting action - got a vet to put microchips in the remaining ferns!

Sure enough, a couple more were stolen, but VBG announced the theft on the local news, and that the plants had been microchipped. They were found dumped a couple of days later.

Importing tree ferns into Britain is causing DEFRA (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) some concern. As well as bringing in the plants, non-native species of pests and diseases as well as mosses and liverworts are being imported. Examples of these alien invaders include : a trap-door spider, flatworms and predatory snails that can eat earthworms

Most tree ferns are generally imported as dormant 'logs', but the hairy trunks are ideal hiding places for pests and small plants. Lax application of a fumigant has resulted in alien flora and fauna turning up in UK nurseries.

DEFRA is putting pressure on Australasian exporters to tighten up pest and disease control. All imported stock into the UK must be accompanied by certification with treatment details ie fumigation with Methyl Bromide. There must be full inspection to ensure no soil, pests or weeds are brought in. If they fail to comply, DEFRA will destroy or return the consignment



Blechnum penna-marina
Alpine Hardfern

Found in both Australia and New Zealand *Blechnum penna-marina* is a low spreading fern with creeping wiry rhizomes forming thick mats upto 1m across. It is a useful fern for groundcover under trees and shrubs provided the growing medium isn't too dry. Growing at a height of about 0.2m it is ideal for establishing on stone walls and in rock crevices in a rock garden situation. New fronds are an attractive reddish-bronze as are the fertile fronds when they emerge

Continuing on the subject of tree ferns...How to succeed with *Dicksonia antartica*, the soft tree fern.

Conditions required for successful growing of tree ferns

- Sheltered position
- Away from drying winds - the fronds require high humidity
- In partial or full shade - ideally under the canopy of trees
- Plenty of food but not high levels of nitrogen.
- Apply a mulch of leaf mould around them
- Acid woodland soil
- Newly acquired 'logs' need to be sprayed with water - the trunks are actually fibrous roots.
- Can be grown in a large pot but look better if planted in groups in the open garden.

Winter care

- To protect the crown, fill with straw to insulate against frost. A cladding of straw around the trunk can also provide protection from the coldest weather.

Respect your tree fern. A 90cm trunk is probably 50-60 years old.

☺ Also see Tom Bramley's article

EAT YOUR GREENS!

According to Andrew Crowe, who is interested in 'New Zealand's bush foods', many of the young fronds of ferns are edible, including hen and chicken fern *Asplenium bulbiferum*, shining spleenwort *A. oblongifolium*, hard ferns (*Blechnum* species), parsley fern (*Botrychium australe*), and common shield fern (*Polystichum richardii*). He suggests boiling *Blechnum* fronds for 15 mins and adding a dressing of oil, lemon juice, garlic and salt.

NEED A TONIC?

The Aborigines ate the roasted stalks of young leaves from the Rough Tree Fern, *Cyathea australis*, as a tonic after any kind of disease.

Ascog Hall

If you are ever on the island of Bute in western Scotland, pay a visit to Ascog Hall, where you will find a recently restored Victorian fernery. Reputed to be approximately 130 years old, it was built at a time when Victorian Britain was consumed by a passion for collecting ferns. Early illustrations show that even in the 1870s it housed tree ferns. Bute has a relatively mild climate, surrounded by sea warmed by the Gulf Stream.

In the early 1970s Kath and Wallace Fyfe, while out for a walk on Bute, came across what appeared to be a jungle with a collection of turrets poking out. Investigation of the site revealed a sunken structure almost covered by ivy. Pushing aside the vegetation they uncovered the hidden conservatory still housing tree ferns and smaller ferns colonising the walls.



Despite enquiries on Bute, no-one seemed to know who the fernery belonged to. Then in 1986 the victorian mansion belonging to the turrets came on the market. The Fyfes put in a bid for it and secured it.

By this time nearly every pane of glass in the fernery had been broken and needed replacing. The roof was very near to collapsing and the interior was choked with brambles. Despite all this, one tree fern had survived. A huge specimen of *Todea barbara* with a 'trunk' a metre in diameter and 3 metres high. It is estimated that this fern is over 1,000 years old.

A grant awarded by Historic Scotland allowed the Fyfes to restore the fernery. Work began in 1995. Liaison with the RBGE, along with an article written for the *Gardeners' Chronicle* in October 1879 in which there was a detailed list of the plants housed by the fernery at the time, helped provide a basis for the planting plan. The fernery was planted up in Spring 1997.

The subterranean design allows the fernery to be unheated while supporting sub-tropical vegetation. Interior walls are of the local red sandstone and at the far end a small waterfall divides into a stream which meanders down the centre. The plantings are grouped geographically. Various species of *Dicksonia* are planted in the centre of the conservatory, and New Zealand is represented by groupings of *Leptopteris superba, L. hymenophylloides* and *Pellaea rotundifolia.* Although small, there are hundreds of ferns to see, from filmy species to the larger tree ferns.



While on Bute, pay a visit to Mount Stuart, one of Scotland's finest gardens set in 300 acres. There is a truely exotic feel, due to the special interest in plants from the southern hemisphere.

ferns...ferns...ferns...ferns...ferns...ferns

Patio plants

Jeff Irons

Since pot plants on a patio are an established part of our gardens, I thought that I would see whether any from Australia and New Zealand could be found in my local garden centres. Out of the six garden centres visited, one of them with parking for 500 cars, phormiums excepted, not one had even a single plant from New Zealand; one had a few Australians – *Brachyscome* "Blue", *B.* "Strawberry Mousse" and *Scaevola* "Zig-zag". I was surprised to see only two brachyscomes. *B. multifida* and *B. dilatata* are so well known that I fully expected to see them, along with *Isotoma axillaris*.



Brachyscome multifida

Few readers will need an introduction to brachyscomes. For the uninitiated they are daisies. Often used in baskets, *B. dilatata* and *B. multifida* are about 15-20cm high and have blue flowers all through summer. "Strawberry Mousse" has larger flowers and I find its pinkish-purple colour unpleasing. The scaevolas that we can buy are all hybrids or selections of *S. aemula*. They are tender perennials with fan shaped flower heads of various shades of blue, sometimes with a central stripe, that bloom throughout summer and early autumn. In my part of north-west England a single plant will have grown to be about 40-50cm across and 20cm high by the end of the summer. They do not branch much and the flowering stems just keep getting longer. The thing to do is harden your heart and pinch out the tips of a newly purchased specimen. This will encourage it to make branches and produce a denser plant.

Scaevolas are difficult to grow from seed, so at the end of summer cut them back and keep in a frost free greenhouse over winter. More plants can be obtained by rooting cuttings in autumn, taken after pinching out the flower head. *Isotoma axillaris* is, I believe, a

first rate blue flowered pot plant for a patio. By the end of summer a single specimen should be 60cm or more across and as much high. Its star shaped flowers can be seen from June right up to the first frosts. It too can be cut back and kept for next year, or seed can be saved. The milky sap can cause skin irritation, so do wear rubber gloves when handling it.

I am never without the Incense Plant, *Calomeria amaranthoides*. Seed is sown in March, for flowering the following summer. The seedlings are potted on progressively, so that by the end of summer they are in 10" pots. Except when frost is forecast these stay outside all through winter. Even on a chilly November day they scent the air. In late summer plants display long plumes (up to 1m long) of tiny amaranth coloured flowers. Usually grown as a biennial, the species will live for up to 5 years, being put into progressively larger pots – up to half a barrel in size. However big plants in large pots get rather gaunt and they have such a huge demand for water that it is best to get rid of them after flowering and use fresh stock every year.

Other species can be used as temporary fillers for a patio. In its third year of blooming, during August and early September 2005 my *Rhododendron viriosum* bore 9 trusses of its 2" wide pendent bell shaped flowers, with 4 or even 5 blooms in each truss. Being in the *Vireya* section of *Rhododendron*, it needs to be kept dry over winter. An unheated greenhouse is adequate; though if the plant is insufficiently dry, cold will cause brown spots to appear on the leaves. This, the most commonly seen species, is the one that for many years was mistakenly called *Rhododendron lochiae* – a plant with very different flowers.

That is my selection of patio plants. If you have any others do let Sue know about them.

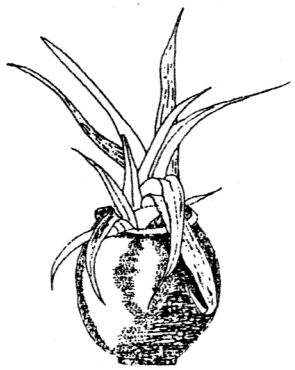


Astelias

Look out in your local garden centre in 2006 for *Astelia banksii* and *Astelia nervosa* 'Westland', two plants which will make excellent patio subjects.

Astelia banksii, known to the maoris as wharawhara, forms clumps of narrow silver-green leaves upto 2m tall. The small starry flowers are mostly dioecious (male and female flowers on different plants), and rather insignificant, often tucked among the foliage, followed by more prominent fruiting heads in autumn.

Astelia nervosa 'Westland' is clump-forming with tufts of silvery-bronze leaves.

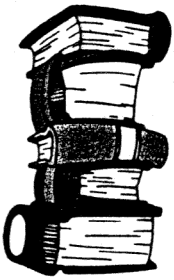


Astelia sp

In frost-prone areas it is best to grow astelias in pots and move them into a cool greenhouse or conservatory over winter.

For pot cultivation use a loamless potting medium and water freely during the growing season, keeping the compost just moist in winter.

For milder regions plant astelias in moist peaty soil in sun or partial shade.



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List of Members

A list of members will be sent out with the Spring issue. If you are happy for the Society or other members to contact you by 'phone/email, please fill in the space on your subscription renewal form.

Leaf pimples on eucalypts

Richard Fensome's observation (Pentachondra Issue 34, page 9) of small yellow pimples (oedema) on the leaves of Eucalyptus glaucescens kept in a tunnel has a simple explanation: the generally high humidity in tunnels. The effect occurs on many eucalyptus species, and has been demonstrated experimentally*.

It can be avoided by maintaining the relative humidity below 65%, although any existing pimples cannot be removed except by waiting for the leaves to abscise. It is often difficult to control relative humidity sufficiently in tunnels, but Eucalyptus glaucescens is hardy and vigorous when grown outdoors so there is no need to keep it under cover.

* 'Humidity-induced gall formation on Eucalyptus species' by I. J. Warrington, Australian Forest Research Vol 10 (1980) pp185-189.

John Purse

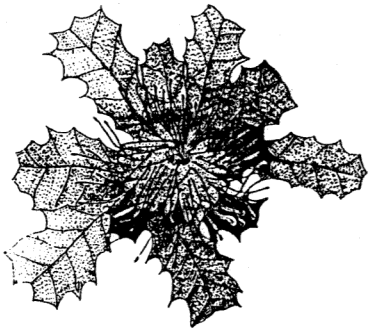
Dryandra formosa

On 2 March 2002, I sowed 4 seeds of *Dryandra formosa.* One of the two seeds which germinated made it past the seedling stage. Just over 3 years later, in early May this year, when only 40cm tall, it flowered. Although I have grown *Dryandra* for many years, this is by far the earliest flowering I have ever had. As I write this, in early September, it is now about 50cm tall, and appears to have 5 more buds swelling. In my experience, *Dryandra*, are much easier to germinate, grow, and flower than *Banksia*. Maybe others have had a different experience.

Jeff Layman

Dryandra praemorsa

Like Jeff, I too have found *Dryandra* easier to cultivate than *Banksia.* In 1990 I sowed seed of the cut-leaf dryandra, *Dryandra praemorsa,* a shrub restricted to the SW of Western Australia. Four seedlings were later transplanted into pots of ericaceous compost to which a generous helping of vermiculite had been added. Good drainage is essential. The young plants are very prone to damping off and require careful watering. Despite one loss during winter 90/91, the remaining three thrived. The following spring, pink tinged buds formed at the end of the branches. Weeks later, they opened into large showy lemon flowers about 6.5cm across, with prominent stamens.



Dryandra praemorsa

In 1995 each plant had approximately 40 blooms. Despite overwintering the plants in a frost-free greenhouse, all three plants died during winter 95/96, when there were prolonged periods of freezing temperatures, both day and night. Although the plants only survived 6 years, this is longer than the two or three months success I've had with *Banksia* seedlings!

Sue Hyams

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Lacebarks & Ribbonwoods

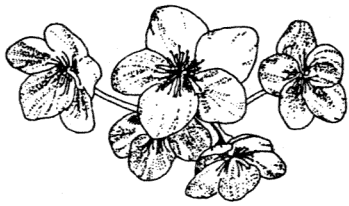


When visiting the Walled Garden at Bodelwyddan Castle in North Wales in early September, I noticed a splendid specimen of *Hoheria sexstylosa*. Every branch was weighted down with clusters of white flowers, the whole tree some 3m high up to the top of the wall. I have previously only seen *H. lyallii* in flower, and this was very much superior.

Tony Entwistle

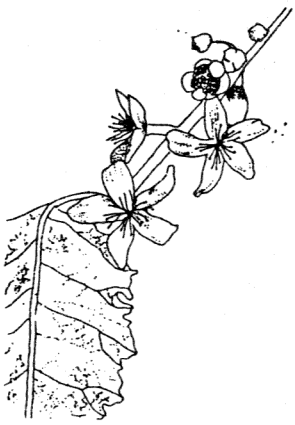
Hoheria is a New Zealand endemic genus. All five species are cultivated for their white scented flowers. In the UK the deciduous species are more reliable than the evergreen species. For best results, choose a sheltered site away from cold, drying winds.

Hoheria lyallii is a spreading shrub with ovate, deeply toothed, hairy leaves upto 10cm long. It bears a profusion of large white flowers with purple anthers. It is one of the few deciduous native plants.



Hoheria lyallii

Hoheria sexstylosa is an upright evergreen shrub/small tree with lance-shaped, tapered, toothed, glossy leaves upto 9cm long. Cymes of smaller white flowers are produced in summer, in such abundance that the branches tend to weep with their weight.



The fibrous layer beneath the bark has a lace-like appearance giving rise to the common names of lacebarks and ribbon-woods.

Hoheria sexstylosa

Non-organic gardening - and how!

I must state at the start that this article has only limited relevance to Australasian plants. It has been provided to amuse, and perhaps inform those too young to know, of less enlightened ways and means of controlling insect pests.

Whilst perusing the gardening section in a secondhand bookshop, I came across a small volume called **"Insect pests of glasshouse crops", by Herbert W. and Mary Miles.** It was published privately by H.C. Long in October 1935, for the princely sum of 8s 6d (equivalent to about £19 today). The book covers most of the insect pests to be found in greenhouses, and ways of dealing with them. That is what really interested me, as most of what is available to the amateur today is so limited. But 70 years ago it was another matter entirely. To be fair, the book really concerns commercial growing, but I would think that the amateur could obtain just about anything the commercial grower would use in those days.

A small warning here; if there are any of our members who are from the Health and Safety Executive, they really should not read any further without a large whisky or other supportive measure handy.

It is interesting to see that the pests from 70 years ago are still with us. Aphids, caterpillars, mealy bugs, scale insects, red spider mites, and white fly to name but a few. Add to those the soil pests such as vine weevils, wireworms, leatherjackets, root mealy bugs, fungus gnats, slugs, etc. How these were dealt with is almost unbelievable in today's safety-conscious (or should that be litigious?) climate. The arsenal consisted of chemicals such as cyanides, lead arsenate, nicotine, mercuric chloride, carbon bisulphide, tetrachloroethane, sodium aluminium fluoride, and naphthalene. Derris and pyrethrum were also used.

What is extraordinary is the scant attention given to safety. Here are some quotes; the first relates to treating scale insect with nicotine:

"Old scales ... can be removed by placing each plant under a jet of water ... and turning the plant so that all parts, especially the under sides of the leaves, receive the full force of the water; but fresh scales are usually firmly attached to the plant and some scraping is required to remove them. When only a few plants have to be washed and scraped, nicotine may be added to the washing water at the rate of 15 grams per 45 litres, *but where men have to work for long periods at the washing of plants it is best to apply the*

nicotine later as a spray to the washed plants."

Note the words I have italicised. It is just recommended to use nicotine later in the case of possible prolonged exposure. Nothing about it being essential for safety!

The second quote relates to fumigating the glasshouse with hydrocyanic acid:

"This is a colourless gas with a definite almond-like odour. It is highly toxic to insects, but is also injurious to plants unless special precautions are taken. The gas is highly poisonous to man, *and the operator must leave the glasshouse once the fumigation has started*, especially when the gas is liberated rapidly as in the "pot" method."

For those who do not know, the "pot" method consists of dropping sodium cyanide into a jar of sulphuric acid, when the hydrocyanic acid gas is generated rapidly. This is essentially identical to the method of generating hydrocyanic acid for capital punishment using the "gas chamber"! So the operator had to take his chances; if he slipped, it doesn't bear thinking about. There are several further pages dedicated to the use of cyanide, with some detail concerning the care to be taken so that the plants do not suffer. To be fair, the final paragraph emphasises the danger to man, and ends with "...every precaution should be taken when it is used as a glasshouse fumigant".

It is of note that as little as 60 mg of nicotine or hydrocyanic acid can be fatal. Nicotine is absorbed through the skin. Hydrocyanic acid acts so rapidly (30 seconds), that any antidote must be immediately available. I doubt that it was in those days.

To be fair, the book does mention the use of *Encarsia formosa* to treat White Fly. So biological control was readily available even in 1935! In fact, the effect of *Encarsia* upon White Fly was first seen in 1926, according to the book.

Is any of this of relevance to Australasian plants? Well, we do still have to grow them in greenhouses most of the time. And, specifically, *Acacia*, *Grevillea*, and *Chorozema* (sic) are mentioned in the book as being attacked by various pests. These days, we have imidacloprid to deal with many pests, but as far as I know, none of the organophosphorus insecticides are still available to the amateur. We have come a long way since 1935, but maybe the pendulum has swung a little too far in the other direction.

Jeff Layman

Tony Entwistle has picked the following information from the APS Victoria Newsletter 'Growing Australian'.

- Marilyn Gray recommends *Prostanthera porcata*, a dwarf sp from NSW with deep pink flowers.

- The Acacia controversy seems now at an end - the new type sp will be *A. penninervis* and of the almost 1000 spp in Australia, 945 will remain Acacia, 7 will become *Vachella* and 2 *Senegalia* (which name will now apply to most S Af., Indian and S.Amercan spp).

- *Callistemon* and *Melaleuca* are to be merged into one genus soon - there is already a "grey area" between the two with some spp difficult to place; *Melaleuca*, the largest genus (around 200spp) has stamens joined at base in bundles, *Callistemon* stamens are free.

- Rodger Elliott writes on frost damage - this seems to apply mostly to still frosts, which in Australia are of short duration, mostly late night and early am. He recommends studying the microclimate of one's own garden e.g. from noting hoar frost; removing weeds which hinder air movement, using pebbles rather than mulch around plants, keeping the soil moist (hardly necessary here!) and the surface unbroken, and spraying plants in the autumn with seaweed extract to toughen tissue.

- John Facey gives a list of spp benefiting from smoke treatment:- *Anigozanthos, Conostyilis, Geleznowia, Philotheca, Hibbertia, Verticordia, Pimelea, Calytrix, Lechenaultia* and *Thysanotis*. Smoke seems to prevent germination of some spp such as *Rhodanthe* and other ' everlastings'.

- An account of the time taken to root summer cuttings (July-Sept our time) is interesting: rooted in pots in coarse sand/peat (4:1 ratio). Quickest were (under 6 weeks) *Chamaelaucium, Eremophila, Prostanthera, Helichrysum* and *Stemodia*. Under 10 weeks were *Isopogon, Verticordia*, some *Grevillea, Crowea, Thomasia, Adenanthera*. Under 3 months *Banksia, Hakea, Lambertia, Melaleuca, Darwinia*, some *Grevillea* and longest of all (18 months) *Persoonia*.

- An article on *Pomaderris* notes that there are 15 spp in Queensland, 40 in NSW, 35 in Vic, 5 in SA and 8 in Tas. There are 8 in NZ, 3 endemic.

- A book on *Dryandra* is expected under APS auspices - ready end of year.

- *Dianella revoluta* is now divided into 12 spp, and *Thelymitra pauciflora* into 15 spp.

- New Acacia spp include *A.sporadica*, formerly in *A. penninervis*.

- New Eucalypts include *E. litoralis, pyrenaea, hawkeri, walshii, filiformis, tricarpa, decora*.

FOUR OAKS SHOW SEPT 2005

This was even larger than last year with many Dutch and Italian nurseries as always. New was a Chilean nursery (Patagonia Plants- www.patagonia-plants.com), though showing mostly familiar items e.g. *Araucaria, Puya, Embothrium, Gunnera* etc.

The Homestead Nurseries from Boskoop had an interesting display of unusual plants, amongst them Chilean *Gevuina avellana, Peumus boldus, Nothofagus alpina* (remarkably like the Tasmanian *N.gunnii*) and *Weinmannia trichosperma*. Australians included *Callistemon* 'Flaming Fire' with very red leaves, and *Olearia lepidophylla* 'Silver Knight'.

Obviously grasses are "in vogue" at the moment, and there were many new varieties of *Pennisetum*.

A plant that caught my eye was *Fremontodendron* 'Tequila Sunrise' with burnt orange flowers.

Sieont Nursery, Caerarvon, showed a new *Libertia* 'Taupo Sunset' with apricot leaves, and four new Leptospermums, 'Magellan, Electric Red, Pegasus and Centaurius'.

The fogging demonstration by J.D.Ultrasonics was interesting, as this seems to be taking over from misting for propagation (it is widely used in Australia). However, the cost of even a basic apparatus, with single nozzle and air compressor, would be around £500!

ALS Natural Solutions were again promoting "Roots" mycorrhizal preparations, from Novozymes of France. This has 9 ectomycorrhiza and 8 endomycorrhiza and is supposed to stimulate growth and roots and improve tolerance to extremes of temperature. It is watered in to plants or composts. Interestingly, this has been used at Tatton Park on rose beds, and has been found to be beneficial and reduce greenfly by toughening foliage. Whether this would benefit Australian plants is unknown - would the mycorrhiza be the right ones? It costs around £40 for a 450kg pouch!

Tony Entwistle

Rootgrow

A new product appeared on the garden centre shelf this year accompanied by much publicity in national newspapers. **Rootgrow** is packaged mycorrhizal fungi.

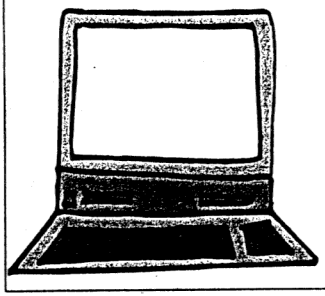
For 500 million years 95% of all plants have depended on mycorrhizal fungi to support them. The fungi are symbiotic organisms, unable to survive on their own. Mycorrhizas attach themselves to the roots and spread out to form a vast secondary root system, which enables plants to withstand the stress of transplanting and achieve active vigorous growth in its first year. The extended roots seek out water deeper in the soil, as well as nutrients so that plants have better drought resistance. The fungal network also provides protection against soil diseases, such as Rose Replant Sickness.

Rootgrow claims that it drastically reduces the time taken for these beneficial fungi to colonise new plants. Without Rootgrow it would take 2-5 years; with Rootgrow it takes 2-3 weeks.

There are three formulations:

- Trees
- Roses & Garden plants
- Houseplants

For more information - Rootgrow is made by PlantWorks Ltd. www.friendlyfungi.co.uk



Changed your e-mail address?

If so, could you please let webmaster@anzplantsoc.org.uk know your new one? Quite a lot of e-mails being sent out are boomeranging back, so if you have not received one from us in the last few months then please send us a message.

Please publicise us!

We have been lucky recently in that the RHS Garden magazine ran a special Australian plant issue earlier this year, and there was also an RHS meeting on them at one of their Westminster shows. We tried to make the most of these opportunities to make ourselves better known and did recruit some new members, but it came as no surprise that a number of people said they had not previously known about us.

Opportunities presented to us like this are few and far between, so we do need to find ways of spreading the word.

And one of the best ways is word of mouth. So I would ask you to use whatever means you can to make more people aware of us. Do you belong to a local gardening club where you could give a talk, or perhaps has a newsletter where you could write an article? Please give it some thought and see what you can do. And if you have an idea or opportunity that you would like help with then please do ask us.

Keith Larkin

Thanks, and looking forward

I would like to thank everyone for their support this year. We have made progress with Pentachondra, with more people contributing articles and colour illustrations. A regional meeting was held in the South as well as the established one in the North. And we met existing and recruited some more members at the RHS meeting. All these have taken peoples' time and effort for which we are grateful.

We would like to build on this, and so I would encourage those who can to contribute articles for Pentachondra. Perhaps you could use the darker evenings to write something now whilst it is fresh in your mind – the Editor won't mind receiving articles well before the deadline! And please remember help is at hand to write articles if you need it.

If you would like to host a regional meeting, or would like to know more about it, then again please do let us know – I'm sure that those who have done so before would be pleased to answer any queries you may have about doing so.

After a long period it has proved necessary to increase the subscription

rate. It is always a difficult decision when to do so and by how much. We do need to fund the improvements we are putting in to place, and I hope you feel you are getting value for money.

So we look forward to your continued support in the future in whatever way you can. And we do realise that not everyone can actively participate in which case your membership is valued.

I can be contacted either by phone on 01926 422596, or email to keith.larkin@virgin.net - I would be pleased to hear from you on these or any other matter you might like to raise.

Keith Larkin
Chairman
Australasian Plant Society

Postal Plant Doctor Advice Clinic

In the previous issue, we introduced our new **'Plant Doctor' - Mark Short**. Mark is an Australian Horticulturist who is happy to provide advice to members.

To contact Mark :
email : kram_trohs@hotmail.com.
Please put 'Postal Plant Doctor' in the subject line.

Mark has now moved back to Australia. His current address is 27 Hary Street, Gosnells, Perth, WESTERN AUSTRALIA, 6110.

Out and About

I was fortunate to attend the Association of Societies for Growing Australian Plants (ASGAP) Conference in Perth, Western Australia, and to take part in a post conference tour to the Albany area this October. The Conference had a strong conservation theme and a wealth of information was disseminated, with an emphasis on the biodiversity of flora in WA.

To see plants I had tried so desperately to grow in Melbourne in their natural habitat, and especially the conditions that a lot of these were exposed to (some mercilessly bombarded by Antarctic laden winds), made me appreciate the tenacity that so many of the plants have in surviving, and also why I didn't succeed so often. Our conditions there, as in the UK, are too different.

The Perth conference was definitely a highlight for me. Mind you, I have to admit to being a Conference junkie. This started when the Australian Plants Society (APS) Victoria took their turn in hosting the conference in 1995 and I was heavily involved with it. To meet people with the same passionate interest from all over Australia was one thing, to catch up with them at subsequent conferences a sheer indulgence.

For the record, the next ASGAP Conference will be hosted by New South Wales in Newcastle in 2007. But more about the WA Conference in our next newsletter.

Nicky Zanen

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