AUSTRALASIAN PLANT SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

PENTACHONDRA

ISSUE 38 MAY 2007



Indigofera australis

AUSTRALASIAN PLANT SOCIETY

Newsletter No.38

May 2007

CONTENTS

Editorial; Library of Images	1
Seedlist; Treasurer's Report	2
Editor's Report; Situation Vacant; Are we a dying Society?	3
Oopsy Daisy	4
What's flowering while I write?	5
Postal Problems	6
An update on Western Australian Eucalypts in Kent	7
Eucalypts in Yorkshire	10
ASGAP 2007; Imperial or Metric?	12
Southern Meeting 2007; AGM & Northern Meeting 2007	13
My Garden on the Wirral	14
Colour Illustrations: Acacia dealbata; Eucalyptus globulus; Beaufortia sparsa; Persoonia pinifolia; Pelargonium rodneyanum; Looking across Red Sand Garden, Cranbourne; Lomandra longifolia NSW; Pseudowintera colorata;	19-22
Gardens in Melbourne	23
The January Gales; News in Brief	24
Acacias in Kent	25
Acacias in an Oxford Garden	27
Wollemi Weekend	28
Letters from America #5	29
The Index	36
An Australian Ardeche Gardener	38
The Subantarctic Plant House, Hobart	39
Thank you; Open Garden;	40

Photographs.....thanks to Judy Clark for supplying the pictures for pages 20-21. Other photos have been supplied by the Society's Library of Images, which is compiled from photographs taken by members. Many thanks to all concerned.

© AUSTRALASIAN PLANT SOCIETY 2007

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2007. In early February Chairman Keith Larkin contacted as many members as possible by email regarding possible articles, and it was a welcome relief when they started to land on the doorstep and in my inbox. Please don't feel that you need to wait until the last minute to mail your news; any time will do. Also, don't think it has to be too technical. Of particular interest are articles on the successful (and unsuccessful) germination/cultivation of seeds obtained from the APS seedlist. This way other members can gain valuable information. If writing a report on your garden, please try to add some information on location, aspect, soil type, local climate etc.

Photographs are also welcome, and they don't necessarily have to be digital ones. Film camera pictures can be scanned and returned. Although the Society has a collection of photographs, it does not have a representative for every plant! As you are aware, there are now several colour illustrations in your newsletter. Some of the pictures come from the Society's library, others are sent as prints, on disk, or emailed by contributors. Can you help the APS to add to its collection? A photograph without an article is also welcome.

As you go through this issue you will notice is the predominance of Australian plants. Plants from New Zealand get very little mention. Some of you may not know that the APS originally started as The Australian Plant Society, but within a year changed to The Australasian Plant Society mainly to help secure the Society's future. It was thought that by expanding from just Australia to Australasia, there would be faster growth and consequently higher subscription income which is needed to finance the activities of the group.

Sue

See Tony Entwistle's report on page 3 concerning the future of your Society.

Seedlist 2007

The charge for seeds this year has returned to its original £3, in view of the change and increase in postage, and of further increases this April. We will review this in due course.

This year's seedlist can be applied for by sending a SAE (at least 6" x 9") to:

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

Alternatively, an electronic version can be obtained by contacting morayacacia@aol.com

The seedlist will be available from 31 March.

*****

Treasurer's Report 2006

This is the first year of our new subscription and as expected the finances are now very healthy. Although it may not be very obvious at first glance, the accounts show that we will enter 2007 some £500 in credit, as we have paid off the November newsletter costs which in previous years have been carried forward as a debt to the following year. Expenses in 2006 were only £100 more than in 2005. There were no regional expenses claimed this year; at the Northern Meeting a collection for a local hospice raised £20.

Looking ahead, it seems likely that we can increase our annual expenditure by some £400-£500. Members may like to think what they would like, and bring ideas to the AGM.

Several possibilities occur to me -

- We could have an extra newsletter (summer issue?), but would there be enough entries to fill one? (Ed - only feasible if a lot more members submit contributions; its sometimes difficult to put together the existing two issues);
- We could have the seedlist completely free, including p&p;
- Or we could give a modest grant towards members' expenses if they attend the AGM.

It still surprises me that less than 50% of members apply for seeds. Surely members even if they have very little garden have a window-ledge! Admittedly some seeds are difficult and there may be failures, but that is part of being a gardener. And considering that the cost of "free" seeds from the RHS is now £10, I think our charges are reasonable. Would members like the seedlist sent out to everyone with the newsletter?

Tony Entwistle

Editor's Report

The increase in subscription fees has allowed for a more colourful newsletter which I feel gives members more information than black and white drawings, or in fact, just a description. Nevertheless, to create an interesting issue, more articles and snippets of news need to find their way to Editorial Headquarters. Its becoming increasingly difficult to compile each issue. Twice a year, I am very grateful to Keith for prompting members to mail their news. It would seem from Annual and Regional Meetings that members are keen to read about other members' experiences of growing Australasian plants in the hope of learning how best to succeed with their cultivation. To read such articles, the Society needs members to submit their news. The size of the article is irrelevant; every snippet of news is important.

There is no 'one way' to grow something successfully. Everyone has a well proven method of growing a plant, and if it works for you, please let us know. Having recently held an 'Orchid Weekend' at the garden centre at which I work, and listening to conflicting successful methods of potting, feeding and caring for orchids by dealers and ordinary members of the public, it proves that there is more than one way of growing a plant.

The Society would love to know how you grow your little Australasians. Make yourself a cuppa and jot down some notes and send to Ed. HQ, either by email (sue.hyams@ic24.net) or snail mail (see address inside back cover).

Sue Hyams

Situation Vacant

At this year's AGM, the position of editor is once again up for grabs. Having sat in this position since 1991, someone else might like to give the seat a try. Think about it!

Are we a dying society?

asks Treasurer Tony.

Hopefully not, but we are a declining one. From a start of 5 members in 1988 we had risen to well over 200 by the end of the century.

Now (March 2007) we only total approx 150-160.

Just from a financial point of view, if we drop below 120 we will have problems.

I keep my members address list in roughly the order of joining since inception and it is interesting that most of the drop-outs occur in the last 3-4 years.

Why should this be? I can only assume that members feel isolated and do not feel that paying £5 for their newsletter is value for money. One has to admit that by paying about twice our current subscription they could join one of the state APS groups and receive quarterly newsletters and the quarterly Australian Plants magazine I full colour.

Our present "north" and "south" informal meetings do not solve this problem fully and I wonder if we could set up smaller area groups. I am not suggesting that like the AGS we have official branches and membership fees, but have "areas" such as NW, NE, Midlands, London and around, SE and SW. There would still be areas where membership was too small or too widely distributed for this to be practical eg. Wales, Scotland, NI, Eire, but it would be a start. But clearly, these areas would need a "lead person" to arrange small social meetings in members' houses and gardens, perhaps only annually at first, and the Society could refund expenses.

We can advertise, but this is very expensive and in the past when we have advertised we have only just recovered the cost. Even the tiniest one-off advert in "The Garden" would cost well over £100, and on the RHS website monthly it would cost us over £3500 per year!

It would be interesting to hear members' views.

Oopsy daisy

In my write up of the southern meeting in the last newsletter, I mentioned that Jeremy's plants don't survive under 10 degrees and that he has bubble wrap over his hothouse. Oh dear, I did get this quite mixed up. The bubble wrap over the hothouse and using a cellar to over winter plants were actually comments made by our member based in France. Apologies if this caused any confusion, and to the people involved.

In January I caught up with a friend in Bristol who I hadn't seen for over 35 years. The highlight of my visit was seeing a correa, full of flowers, in the front garden of one

of her neighbours. It was a pocket handkerchief-sized garden, wholly covered in a gravel mulch, with just the single plant.

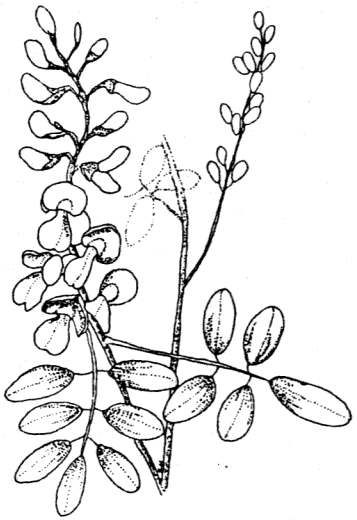
At home, my landlady finally took pity on the correa I picked up at our southern meeting two summers ago and planted it in our garden. For months it didn't move, and suddenly, just before Christmas, it had shot up to four times its size. And has several flowers on it. A lovely surprise.

Nicky Zanen

What's flowering while I write?

Sue Hyams

To give myself the occasional break from sitting down and staring at a monitor, I make a cuppa and wander off into the garden and greenhouse to catch up with what's happening in the gardening world. In early March the greenhouse has a splash of yellow from *Acacia baileyana purpurea*, a real colourwash of red from *Templetonia retusa* and the start of a purple haze from *Indigofera australis*. The acacia, Cootamundra Wattle, is a relatively new acquisition compared to the other two plants. Bought a year ago and replanted into a 10L pot, it has so far spent all its life living in the greenhouse. The yellow pompons are a lovely contrast to the green-purple bipinnate leaves. In complete contrast, *Templetonia* and *Indigofera* are over 10 years old. Also known as Parrot Bush and Cockies Tongues, *Templetonia retusa* is trained and trimmed to an obelisk for support. Each March/April, the obelisk is smothered in scarlet, pea-shaped flowers. After flowering, I regularly clip back unwanted growths of grey-green, leathery leaves restricting it to its 2m tall support. *Indigofera australis* is another member of the pea family with upward facing racemes of slightly fragrant pink-purple flowers. The Austral Indigo is a fast-growing upright open shrub, easily reaching the greenhouse apex when blooming



Indigofera australis

despite regular hard pruning each spring after flowering. Both the Parrot Bush and the Austral Indigo are planted into the greenhouse border, direct into garden soil - a sandy loam. No additional water has ever been applied and they thrive. After ten years or so, their roots have probably travelled beyond the greenhouse and are collecting moisture from rainfall. There is just the occasional infestation of red spider mite/whitefly but generally I manage to keep on top of pests.

Postal Problems

Following the mailing of the last issue of Pentachondra, I received reports that four members, two from Kent and two from the Oxford area, had had to pay a surcharge to collect their copy, having been told by the post office that the newsletter was underpaid.

As with every issue, the December 2006 newsletter was taken to a local post office to enquire about postal costs. We are all aware that, last August, the Royal Mail changed the way in which we pay to send our mail (ie. pricing by envelope size, thickness of letter, as well as weight). I was assured that 23p would be sufficient postage. Why several mailings have been singled out remains a mystery, since all envelopes were identical. One member who had to pay the surcharge, subsequently took his issue to a local sub post office to check what postage should have been paid and was told that the 23p stamp used was sufficient!

Is this just a case of some sorting offices being greedy? I have approached the Royal Mail Customer Service Centre, who despite being contacted three times, still failed to explain why some letters carried enough postage and others did not. They also failed to assure me that a similar thing would not happen again!

I apologise to those members affected.

Sue Hyams

An update on Western Australian Eucalypts in Kent

John Purse

Two years ago, in issue 34 of Pentachondra, I gave an account of some of my initial experiences in growing some eucalypts of Western Australia (WA) in Kent. I even made a couple of predictions on species that seemed particularly worth pursuing. With two further winters behind me, some of these plants are still alive. Some are positively thriving, under cover. One has already flowered, and several more have currently have flower buds. One particular plant promises to be stunning if it does flower. Another has survived its third winter outdoors – just! In this article, I will highlight just three species, and make some further comments on the cultivation of this group of plants in the UK.

Eucalyptus erythrocorys (Red Cap Gum)

This is a small tree, widely grown in parts of Australia that have a Mediterranean climate. Its common name refers to the bright red ribbed cap of the maturing flower buds. The flowers are large and bright yellow, and later develop into ornamental woody seed capsules. I raised several plants from seed in 2004, and found them very easy to grow and to be remarkably free of pests and diseases, even in a greenhouse. In my previous article, I suggested that this species, and related ones, might be worth growing in containers outdoors, but overwintered in a cool conservatory.

In the summer of 2005, one of these plants was about 1 metre tall, growing in a container in a sunny but fairly exposed part of my garden in the North Downs. It initiated about a dozen flower buds at that time, and these developed rapidly. I moved this plant to a polytunnel in the autumn of that year, and the buds continued to develop despite the winter gloom. The larger caps started to turn red, and the first bright yellow stamens started to appear as the first cap started to lift. Then the heating failed, and the plant was frosted. The buds were the most seriously damaged parts, and they all aborted in the following weeks. But I cut the plant back hard, and it has re-sprouted nicely during 2006, producing an attractive bushy plant. It has stayed in the polytunnel, because it has rooted into the soil, and it has stayed remarkably free of all pests and diseases. It is this feature, as much as the buds and flowers, that makes me

persevere with this species – I still think it could be an interesting species for conservatories.

Eucalyptus caesia subspecies *magna* (Silver princess)

Silver Princess is probably the most well-known ornamental eucalypt originating from Western Australia. I raised plants from seed in 2004, and found them easy to grow and moderately frost tolerant.

Emboldened by the latter observation, I planted one out against a SW facing wall in my garden in 2005. Two winters later, it is still there, though I would be the first to admit that it struggles with hard frosts. Having said that, it recovered from the 2005/06 winter (-7°C in the open). It kept its beautiful glossy new shoots throughout the 2006/07 winter until a hard frost finally arrived in February 2007 and scorched these. Until then, it had seemed happy enough in cool and very wet weather, and had no pest or disease problems whatsoever.

I also put two plants in the ground in the frost-free polytunnel in 2005. These have grown vigorously, and were unaffected by the heating failure in late 2005. Both plants initiated flower buds in July 2006, with one of the plants laden with over 200 buds! These buds have grown tremendously in size since then, with no sign of bud abortion. One branch has cracked under the weight of buds, and the whole plant is now well-supported with stakes! The plants seem healthy and are free of serious pests and diseases in the polytunnel, though colonies of aphids appear periodically on tender young shoots. Hopefully the flowers will open this year. It will not be a first for this species in the UK though, as Tom Hart-Dyke at Lullingstone Castle in Kent has a plant in his greenhouse that flowered in summer 2006. This event was noted in a recent edition of The Plantsman, and even made BBC South-East news!

Eucalyptus kruseana (Book-leaf mallee)

This is a popular ornamental shrub in Mediterranean climates, and originates from the WA goldfields near Kalgoorlie. It is attractive at all stages of growth, but its displays of prolific yellow flowers against its glaucous juvenile foliage are particularly striking. I bought 2 container-grown plants from the now-closed Plantbase nursery at Lamberhurst, Kent, one in 2004 and another in 2005. Both originating from a

sowing in 2002. I moved these into the polytunnel for their first winters, and they promptly rooted into the ground and seemed happier there. The first plant initiated a lot of flower buds in 2005, but these aborted during the extended grey winter in early 2006. It initiated a lot more buds in 2006, and the first of these opened in early January 2007. At the end of February, most buds remain unopened, and the flowers that have opened look rather weak and lack the 'sparkle' of those on plants in kinder climates.

I suspect the flowering of this species is a 'first' for the UK. Having said this, I think this species is not really happy here, even in the polytunnel. Given its origin in the hot and sunny climate of the goldfields, this is perhaps not too surprisng. It is also fairly susceptible to the eucalyptus psyllid, though the effect of this is probably less debilitating than its appearance can suggest.

Some general comments

In my article in 2005 I suggested that eucalypts native to inland WA and which also grow happily in gardens along the cooler and wetter south coast there, might be fairly closely adapted to being grown in the UK. I still think there is something in this idea, and Tom Hart-Dyke's and my experiences with Silver Princess perhaps give the clearest supporting evidence. It may also be significant that *E. kruseana,* which seems less happy in the UK, does not appear to be planted on the south coast of WA.

The growth and flower bud initiation I have observed indicates that light levels in the UK are adequate. This is especially true in the polytunnel, where the polythene (now opaque with age) must absorb a significant amount of sunlight. It remains less clear whether the light levels in the UK are always adequate to support good development of flower buds. But the real difference within the polytunnel is of course the temperature: night temperatures inside are close to ambient (with heaters preventing the temperature falling below zero), but on sunny days the temperature inside is at least 5 degrees above ambient, and thus more akin to temperatures generally prevailing in the south-west of WA.

So the general message seem to be that some of the eucalypts from WA are worth trying in the UK – at least by enthusiasts who like challenges, and particularly if they can arrange for plenty of warmth from the sun . A few species

might grow satisfactorily, and flower in some years, if planted outdoors against a south-facing wall in exceptionally mild and sunny locations. *E. caesia* would be a more obvious possibility for this. Other species may respond quite well to being grown in large containers, either in sunny and sheltered outdoor spots or in conservatories during the summer, while being over-wintered in cool greenhouses. A few species, notably red-cap gum, may prove to be interesting subjects for being grown in the ground within larger greenhouses.

PS. The first flower on one of my *E. caesia* plants started to open 8th March. It should look stunning once fully opened, but I won't see it again for 12 days!

© John Purse 2007



Eucalypts in Yorkshire

In late February as this mildest of winters approaches its end, I must confess that there is nothing of note to report concerning the Australasian contingent in the garden. Everything has survived as was to be expected and behaved in much the same way as it has done for several winters past. Therefore I am taking the opportunity to dwell upon those specimens which I grow of what must be the best known of all Australian genera, if one not really to be recommended.

The cultivation of eucalyptus in a suburban garden is considered by many to be one of the most frightful enormities which can be perpetrated by an individual upon his own neighbourhood. But there is another school of thought which defiantly proclaims "I don't need no good advice". (Those learned in such matters inform me that the source of this quotation can be traced back to Girls Aloud's Greatest Hits, referring to an entirely different topic.)

I happen to grow nine different eucalyptus species. *Paliformis* is the least decorative as, though topped with a few spindly twig-like branches and having leaves of the typical

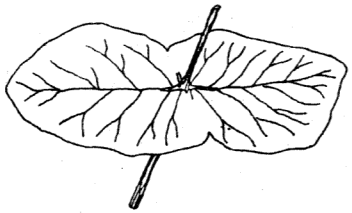
lance-shaped type as well as clusters of small insignificant flowers close to the stem, it really does resemble a pole but so far as I am aware none of the neighbourhood drunks coming home on a Saturday night has succumbed to the temptation to attempt to dance around it.

Gunnii is the species most commonly for sale in garden centres, where its attractive grey-green or blue-green juvenile foliage tempts potential buyers, but if not constantly cut back, within a decade it will become quite a tall substantial tree, as mine is, most of its moderate-sized creamy white flowers being too high up to be easily noticed.

The recent run of mild winters has allowed *globulus* to grow almost too big but it does produce clusters of really large 4cm flowers, though its mid-green adult foliage is not so attractive as the blue-green juvenile leaves. It is currently shedding a great deal of brown outer bark to reveal a layer of pale green bark underneath, as is *viminalis* which has already been cut back to the ground once but has surged back at a tremendous rate. This tree produces small flowers in great profusion in late summer. My *glaucescens* is not particularly rampant in its habit of growth though I have seen a very large specimen at RHS Harlow Carr, near Harrogate. The most remarkable feature of my tree is the abrupt transition in the colour of the bark from brown and dull green in its lower half to bright glaucous in its upper reaches.

Dalrympleana is another tree which can grow too tall, though for some reason mine is still within bounds and the bark does not produce a very pleasing mixture of shades of green. My *niphophila* is by no means the tree it ought to be, in fact nothing more than a loose collection of branches each about 1m in length arising directly from the ground. I think this is certainly not typical.

My *perriniana* has long since lost its attractive bluish stem clasping juvenile foliage and has settled into being a small tree no more than five metres in height with quite a thin trunk and narrow mid-green lance-shaped leaves.



Eucalyptus perriniana juvenile foliage

My favourite among these eucalypts is *cordata* made distinctive by its broad heart-shaped grey blue leaves and its habit of flowering over winter. The cream coloured flowers are prominent and quite a good size, almost 3cm across. This is also the only one so well branched that it could just as easily by called a shrub as a small tree. In addition it has the best example of a swollen lignotuber, just above ground level. That completes the record of my small collection of this genus as it is now before the urge to wield an axe or a chainsaw becomes overwhelming.

Thomas Naylor

The next ASGAP Conference will be held in Newcastle, NSW, from 1-5 October 2007.

Celebrating 50 years this year, the theme is : From Gums to Gullies : Flora in Transition.

For more information email asgap_conference@yahoo.com.au or check out the website http://asgap.org.au/whatson.html. alternatively you can call Nicky Zanen on 07 950 428 527.

There will also be pre and post conference tours to the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area; Mid North Coast between Port Stephens and New England; Coffs Harbour; and Greater Sydney area and New England.

Imperial or Metric?

Some articles have a mixture of both! Does it really matter? I don't think so. I'm sure we can visualise the size however its measured. And most of all, we don't want to deter members writing articles because they think they have to convert measurements to metric when they have been educated in feet and inches.

Southern Meeting : 12 May 2007

Our day begins with a visit to Heather and John Angrave at The Old Walled Gardens, Oxonheath, Hadlow, Tonbridge Kent TN11 9SS. This is a specialist nursery with a huge range of Australian shrubs and climbers to see and purchase, set in a beautiful quiet location with lovely views. We aim to start our meeting at 11.00 am. Heather has promised us a cuppa tea. It may be tricky to find the nursery so a meeting point is being arranged in Hadlow beforehand.

Then we head to Great Comp Garden, Comp Lane. An entry fee is payable (£4.50 currently).

On our arrival Eric Cameron will give us a ten minute introduction, then we can go and have lunch. This may be purchased from the tearooms (as a guide: filled rolls, baked potatoes, cheese ploughmans, prices about £4.25 to £5.95) or alternatively bring your own packed lunch and eat it in the gardens.

We are also hopeful that William Dyson, (head gardener), will be able to wander round the gardens with us after lunch.

Great Comp is a monument to the energy and enthusiasm of Eric Cameron who has built up the garden over the last 40 years. The plant content is of considerable horticultural interest and includes some 30 magnolia cultivars and a good range of rhododendrons, conifers, heathers and herbaceous plants: over 3,000 different plants in all. But the most interesting thing about the garden is the way in which large areas have been planted for minimum maintenance. There is much to learn and admire here. Dysons Nurseries, best known for their salvias, are also based within the grounds.

Please let Judy Clark know if you are coming by 1 May 2007.
Tel : 01424 720369 or email jvc4@tutor.open.ac.uk.

AGM 2007 : 16 June 2007

This year's AGM will be combined with the Northern meeting and will take place on Saturday June 16th at Ness Gardens, at 2pm. If the weather is fine there will be an opportunity afterwards to visit Jeff Irons' garden, about 15-20 mins. drive away and if it is wet instead of that we shall use the Ness Lecture Theatre for an illustrated talk about Antipodean plants in cultivation and in the wild.

Voted the 3rd best in Britain by Daily Telegraph readers the Gardens have been described as Britain's best learning garden. About 40 acres are open to the public and they house the largest collection of *Sorbus* along with notable collections of *Alnus, Betula, Cotoneaster, Hedera,* osiers (Stott Willow Collection) and *Santolina.* The late flowering Ness Holt azaleas may be in bloom at the

time of our meeting. Light refreshments and meals can be bought in the Visitor Centre. Wheelchairs are available, though a motorised one needs to be booked in advance. Access by public transport is poor and the best way to get to the Gardens by car is from the end of the M56. Details can be found on www.nessgardens.org or can be got from from Jeff Irons.

Members who wish to tour Ness Gardens before the AGM will have to pay for their entry. Your fee will be re-imbursed. If possible, can you let Jeff Irons or Tony Entwistle know if you're attending. Tony is able to pick up anyone travelling by train at Chester on the way.

My garden

Jeff Irons

Last year a visitor commented that my garden has a very Australian look. That surprised me, because I have always regarded it as an English garden. On reflection I decided that the Australian character must come from the large proportion of plants with small leaves and their habit of bearing a large number of small flowers. In contrast to most British gardens, in which nearly all plants have large leaves and a small number of large flowers. Another thing making my garden different could be that the overall impression is of a garden dominated by woody plants, with only a few herbaceous ones.

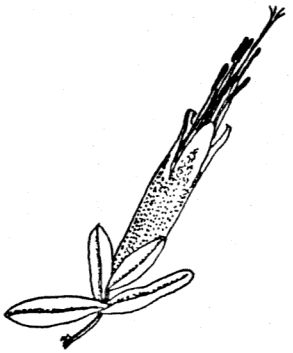
In their shapes my front and back gardens reflect the symmetry of the house. Mindful of this I have changed very little, especially not their shapes. The house is at a slight angle to the road, so that it faces exactly north-west. A consequence of this is that the rectangular back garden has four borders, still at their original width of 12 feet, each facing a different compass direction and receiving different light. Although formal in shape, it is planted informally. There are very few New Zealand plants, not because I favour Australia, but because most of them do not grow as well as those from Australia. They are decidedly difficult and being lazy I always opt for the easy way out – so do not grow them. I do not go in for strong 'architectural' shapes, which really require a separate area that they can dominate. Fortunately for me, my wife dislikes cordylines and phormiums and she cannot understand why anyone should give garden space to juvenile *Pseudopanax*. So these spiky plants are absent from the garden. As with any garden, the soil governs what we can grow. Ours has the sort of acidity that makes hydrangeas produce flowers with a bilious purple colour.

Two borders, with very different aspects, can be used to show the range of plants in the garden. One of them, the north-east facing border, has been the easiest to plant. At best it receives sun in summer for half the day. Even then, parts of it never see the sun. In winter what sun there is

never gets to it. Always cool and moist, it is home to plants from wet forests. A 21 year old seedling *Eucryphia lucida* with unusually dense foliage was about 1.5m high when the early frost of November 2005 killed it. The plant had first flowered when 17 years old. Two *Anopterus glandulosa* seedlings bloom in May or June. The taller is now about 4ft high. I've never been fortunate enough to see their old leaves turn red at the same time as they are in flower, it always happens afterwards. When in bloom their showy white flowers are the star of the garden. Nowhere near as big as my *Crinodendron*, the shrubs are much more elegant and have more attractive leaves. A 15ft high *Pittosporum bicolor* died in the 2000 winter, when the garden was flooded. Never very showy, it was not replaced. The same fate overtook a seedling *Phyllocladus aspleniifolius* as also befell both the green cladoded and glaucous cladoded forms of *P. aspleniifolius var. alpina.* They have been replaced with *Athrotaxis cupressoides* and *A. selaginioides.* Eventually these two will form part of the background of the border, in front of next doors's deciduous shrubs. The South American *Fitzroya archeri* also died in the 2000 winter, but *Pilgerodendron uviferum,* shrugged off its period of immersion. Another conifer, *Microstrobos fitzgeraldii,* enjoys the moist conditions of this bed. About 18" high it was spreading widely until partly killed by the catastrophic winter of 2000. Other dwarf conifers in this bed are *Microcachrys tetragona* and *Diselma archeri* "Red Dwarf". The *Microcachrys* makes a long stem that spreads out across the ground and carries red fruits in summer. It will self layer. Unlike the equally diminutive New Zealander *Lepidothamnus laxifolius* it does not look dead for half the year. The *Diselma* is a vegetatively propagated form, found by a nurseryman on Tasmania's Mount Read. The parent had a mature height of 60cm. In the 16 years that I have had it, this plant has reached 30cm in height and 60 cm in width. Apart from the fact that its leaves are smaller than those of my female *D. archeri* (bought 33 years ago) it has pale green young growth. The Huon Pine, *Lagarostrobos franklinii,* is one of the many conifers whose rooted cuttings will not make a new leader. Initially it was trained up a cane and now spreads out sideways over a good 4ft. Some of its arching branches touch the ground, where eventually they will self layer. As companions for the front of this border I have a patch of *Primula bulleyana* and other trouble-free, easy to grow plants such as *Astilbe rivularis* var. *myriantha, Ribes laurifolia, Nomocharis aperta* and *pardanthina, Corydalis elata, Lobelia cardinalis, Libertia caerulea, Ugni candollei, Zenobia pulverulenta* and *Dactylorhiza fuchsii.* The lowly *Boronia parviflora* puts its pale pink flowers out every summer and obligingly layers itself. About 12-18" high, *Epacris paludosa* has white

flowers in summer. Recently I've added the spring blooming *E. serpyllifolia. Leptospermum riparium* has grown to be much taller than the 4m or so given by the Flora of Tasmania. Around 7m high, it is narrow for the height and the white flowers can be seen in early summer. *Pseudowintera colorata* is usually grown in a sunny spot but mine is in shade. I find that although inconspicuous in summer, it shows up well in the pale light of winter and brightens up what would otherwise be a dark place. At the sunny end of the bed, three white flowered *Leptospermum scoparium,* grown from seeds collected in Tasmania, also bloom in June. Naturally fairly small, they are kept down to a height of about 3 ft. by pruning after flowering. In the centre of the bed a large clump of the Tassel Rush, *Baloskion tetraphyllum,* provides year round interest. Even though it is always in shade, the bright green of its culms stands out particularly well in winter. Grown from Tasmanian seed, the clump is about 1.8m high and 3m across. Mainland seed produces smaller plants, only about 1m high. Even though it is found on wet flats and in swamp margins this species, like all restios, is drought tolerant. Australian literature states that it will also grow in standing water.

Plants in the borders close to the south–east facing wall of the house are all fairly small and are there because I think they will tolerate, and possibly need, maximum light. Against the house are my nerines and (possibly) tender Australian plants such as the correas, *C. alba* and *C. backhouseana* and *decumbens* . They bloom throughout the winter and have been there for about 25 years.

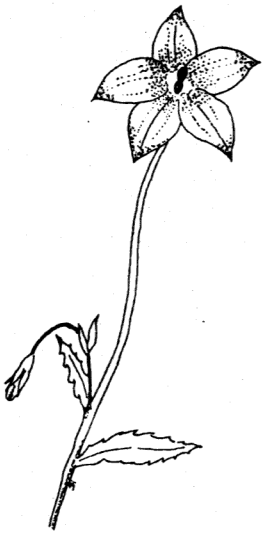


Correa decumbens

The dry conditions stop *Libertia peregrinans* from doing too much of what it wants to do - wandering. The sunny site makes the orangy stripe on its leaves colour well. Between the path and the back lawn *Grevillea australis var brevifolia* puts forth a profuse display of its honey scented flowers every March. Very vigorous, it is tolerated only because of this scent. The flowers themselves are small and have a dirty white colour. Elsewhere in the garden *G. australis var. australis* is no better. Upright in habit, it blooms from November to March, never makes much of a display and so never spreads very much scent. As soon as I find something better, it will be removed. No such criticism can be levelled at

Diplarrena latifolia. This 18" high forb can be relied upon to put on a good display of white flowers, marked with purple and yellow, for about 3-4 weeks in May and June. Experience in the notoriously dry and semi-continental climate of Huntingdonshire proved that it is both drought and cold tolerant. The 9" high *Hebe* "Youngii" makes good ground cover and provides a patch of purple in June. *H. pinguicula* "Pagei" grows well in sandy parts of Wirral but has never performed in my garden. Removal is long overdue. The easy and trouble free *Parahebe x bidwillii* extends the flowering into August. *Leptospermum scoparium* "Nichollsii Nanum" never gets to be more than 9cm in height and makes a tight clump of dark red leaves. In summer they are decorated with pale red flowers. It is not to my liking and is grown only because it arose locally. *Leptospermum rupestre* is another very vigorous plant, due for removal. Its only virtue is cold tolerance – scarcely necessary nowadays. No such criticism can be measured against *Leionema phylicifolia*. This is a super small shrub. Only a foot or so high, its yellow flowers brighten March and April. This bed slopes down perhaps a foot to the lawn and its front part is filled with a mixture of 3 parts of grit and one of soil. In this well aerated mix is *Asterolasia trymalioides*. I used to have two seedlings, one spreading and one upright. I ought to have remembered that all *Rutaceae* have small root systems and watered them in the hot weather of 2003. I did not and the upright seedling died. The remaining one is decorated with yellow flowers for most of March and April. *Lissanthe strigosa* came to me as a packet of seed labelled *Cryptandra alpina!* It was plain that the only seedling to come up, though an epacrid, was not a *Cryptandra*. When it flowered the plant keyed out as *L. strigosa*. This small white flowered evergreen shrub blooms reliably every February and March. Cuttings root easily and it can now be bought from Aberconwy Nursery. Grow it in well drained soil. *Kunzea muelleri* is said to bloom profusely only when conditions are just right. I've never had them! Although it spreads well and after 18 years covers an area about 3 feet square the Alpine Kunzea produces few of its yellow flowers and really needs to be tried in another part of the garden. *Lomandra longifolia* was grown from seed collected by Graham Hutchins at Orford, Tasmania, in 1985. Every summer its creamy white flowers decorate the plant. In another part of the garden plants grown from seeds collected in the Blue Mountains of NSW have pale yellow flowers. I believe them to be better than Graham's plants, because the bracts between flowers are soft, whereas those on the Tasmanian clump are hard and stiff, so could injure the eyes of a young child. *Scleranthus singuliflora* and *biflorus* seem to be indestructible, but being nothing more than green mounds, are really only plants for specialist collectors. That

criticism cannot be measured against *Wahlenbergia gloriosa* and *W. ceracea.* Both grow in the gritty portion of the bed. *W. gloriosa* is



Wahlenbergia gloriosa

allowed to wander where it wants and produces masses of its large Royal Blue flowers throughout the summer. *W. ceracea* is supposed to be rhizomatous but mine do not wander. They form a compact clump with lax waxy pale blue flowers that brighten summer and also autumn. More autumn brightness comes from *Euryops tysonii.* I can never understand why this African daisy is not more popular. Easier to grow than Michaelmas daisies it is woody, so does not need staking, is not overly tall, does not suffer from mildew and on a sunny day its yellow flowers really gleam. *Scaevola hookeri* is another gentle mat forming wanderer. I find if grown elsewhere than the gritty spot, it becomes infested with pearlwort and popweed. Its small white flowers can be seen through most of the summer. *Xerochrysum subundulatum and Craspedia coll.* Lankey's Plain *(coolaminica hybrid?)* also grow in the grit bed. Both are long lived. The 15cm high *Xerochrysum* bears glossy yellow daisies, about 7cm across in summer. It is preceeded by the yellow drumstick flowers heads of the grey leaved *Craspedia.* I can understand APS members not wanting seeds of the unknown *Craspedia* but it is a puzzle as to why few ask for the *Xerochrysum*; for it is described in all the standard books on alpines. Other small plants in this grit bed are the blue flowered daisies, *Calotis cuneata* and *Vittadinia muelleri.* Both bloom throughout the summer and into autumn. The 4 inch high *Pelargonium australe* produces masses of its magenta streaked flowers all through summer. A cold winter can kill it, but there are always self sown seedlings to replace the dead plants.

Between them these two beds account for a good proportion of my Australian plants. They receive almost no attention, yet for most of the year provide something on which to feast my eyes.

Lets hope the sun shines on June 16th and Jeff can delight other APS members with, what sounds like, a fascinating garden. Thanks Jeff.

Photographs to accompany Jeff Irons' Article

Lomandra longifolia NSW



Pseudowintera colorata



Some photographs to accompany Judy (

Beaufortia sparsa





Persoonia pinifolia

ark's article *'Gardens in Melbourne'*

Pelargonium rodneyanum





Looking across Red Sand Garden, Cranbourne, with circles of saltbush

Acacia dealbata - see Jeremy Spon's article



Eucalyptus globulus - see Thomas Naylor's news



Gardens in Melbourne

Somewhat unexpectedly I spent most of February 2007 in Melbourne, looking after my mother who is not well. Nonetheless her spirit is willing and we managed a few short trips to native plant gardens including the newly opened (May 2006) Australian Garden at the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne, Maranoa Gardens (Balwyn) and Karwarra Garden (Kalorama, Dandenongs).

The Australian Garden displays plants from all over Australia and although still young promises to be one of the great gardens of the region, if not the world. At its centre is the visually stunning Red Sand Garden planted with circles of Saltbush, inspired by the shapes and colours of arid Australia. Equally dramatic is a grove of grass trees (*Xanthorrhoea* sp) rescued from development sites. I was told that the largest of these is more than 400 years old. I was also very taken with the Dry River Bed with drifts of *Calothamnus* species which must be spectacular when in flower. February is not the best time to see a great variety of species in flower, but nonetheless I spotted three which I would love to have in my garden in England. One is the vermilion-flowered West Australian species *Beaufortia sparsa* (Swamp Bottlebrush), which according to Wrigley and Fagg (2003) is frost hardy (to -7° C) and has flowered outside in southern England. The other two, which both suggest themselves as ground covers, are *Pelargonium rodneyanum* (Magenta Stork's-bill) and *Teucrium racemosum* (grey leaves and white flowers), both also reported to be frost hardy. Jeff Irons wrote about the former in issue 37 but I wonder if anyone has experience of growing the other two in the UK, and also whether anyone knows where to get seed or plants. I couldn't find them on the 2005 APS seed list though a trawl through the Plant Finder did produce a potential supplier of *Beaufortia sparsa*.

Maranoa Gardens were originally privately owned but are now run by Boroondara Council. They display Australian plants in climatic zones and also contain many mature trees (the first plantings were in 1923) including a magnificent *Angophora costata* (Smooth-barked Apple). From a previous visit (September 2003) I remember the fragrance of the Boronias and the enormous flower spikes of *Doryanthes excelsa* (Gymea Lily),

neither of which seem promising for the UK unless protected, though with climate change one never knows. This time it was the dangling yellow flowers of *Persoonia pinifolia* (Pine-leaved Geebung) that caught my attention. It was on the APS seed list; has anyone tried it?

Finally to Karwarra, another garden which contains only Australian plants, both in formal beds and bushland. This was my first visit and I would like to have spent longer there, but I shall go back some spring to see the Waratah and Boronia collections in flower. What I did see, in flower, was a species of *Thomasia*, a genus entirely new to me. It had the most gorgeous softly hairy spring-green leaves reminiscent of English Oak in shape, and small white flowers with purple centres. It could have been *T. quercifolia* or *T. solanacea*. The other plant that caught my eye was *Agonis flexuosa* 'Variegata' (Willow Myrtle), a graceful weeping tree of a striking yellow-green. On looking up them up I found that all three are native to Western Australia and propagated from cuttings, but also that the *Thomasias* are frost hardy. Given that Karwarra experiences frost and even occasional snow none of them would seem impossible candidates for gardens in southern England, though there could well be other reasons why they might not flourish. But that's academic if they haven't been tried.

Reference: Wrigley JW and Fagg M (2003) *Australian Native Plants* (5th edition) Reed New Holland

Judy Clark

The January Gales

My garden in Cheshire did not fare badly, perhaps by being sheltered from the NW by Eddisbury Hill. The only casualty was a large 15-year old Ceanothus blown out of the ground. My *Eucalyptus niphophila*, now nearly the tallest tree in the garden after only 15 years stayed secure, though the wind kindly scattered huge pieces of peeled bark all over the place!

There were many casualties at Tatton Park, some 25 trees blown down, mostly old pines and spruces.

Tony Entwistle

NEWS IN BRIEF : In the last issue Banksia botanist Alex George asked for information from anyone growing banksias outside Australia. At least two APS members are now in correspondence with Alex.

Acacias In Kent

I originally intended to submit a version of this article to the last edition of Pentachondra, but then I thought that as some of the plants mentioned had only been planted outside for one winter, I should wait until a second winter gave them a sterner test. As it turns out, the current winter has been even milder than the last (so far – I am writing this in the third week of February, and perhaps tempting fate!) So here is the article, more or less as originally written, and with the definite proviso that I certainly haven't proved that the acacias mentioned can survive long-term outdoors, even in what seems to be a pretty mild corner of England.

Those members who visited our garden for the APS southern meeting in June last year will know that I am experimenting with acacias outdoors. I thought it might be of interest to provide a few notes for Pentachondra on my experiences so far, together with some observations on one or two other species that appear to have a degree of hardiness in Kent.

I should start by making it clear that it is early days for the plants I have tried outside. There is an element of maritime influence in the Canterbury area where I garden, and until we get one of the prolonged bouts of cold easterly winds which East Kent can experience, it will be impossible to say if any species of *Acacia* is hardy here in the long term.

However, I have attempted to give my plants the best chance by choosing a position in the garden with the best cold air drainage, and the best shelter from north and east winds. (This is not, by the way, near the house.) The soil is naturally fairly well-drained, being clay with flints over chalky sub-soil, and of course I have dug in grit and compost to improve the drainage. Rainfall is as low, and summers are as hot as anywhere in England. I would summarize the results up to now as 'so far, so good.'

Acacia pravissima seems to be generally regarded as one of the hardiest species. It certainly came through the winter of 2005/6 undamaged, as a (rather straggly) 3 ft. specimen, and had a few flowers in the spring of 2006. I know of at least one other garden in Kent, on a south-facing slope in the Weald, where it has survived several winters, so I am quite confident about the prospects for this species.

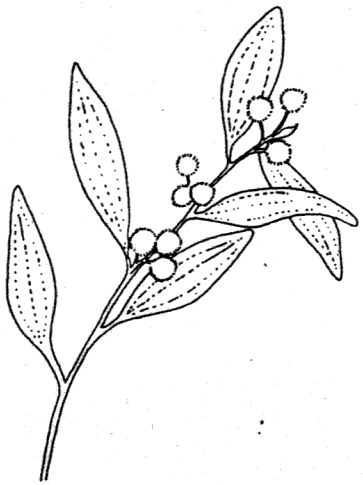
Perhaps less familiar is *A. filicifolia*. I grew this from (APS) seed because it is listed by Celyn Vale Nursery as a relatively hardy species. After cosseting a plant in a pot, over-wintered in the greenhouse, for several years, I finally planted it out in 2005. It has quite a sturdy trunk, albeit rather prone to wind-rock, and like *A. pravissima* was undamaged

during the last two winters. It flowered quite profusely in August 2006, and has also sent out numerous side shoots from low down on the stem, so is obviously happy so far. The leaves are pinnate, and (so far at least) not replaced by phyllodes at maturity.

A third species planted out remains unidentified. I collected the seed on Corfu, where it seems to be naturalized. Corfu does experience quite cold winters, with occasional snow and biting north winds, so I was reasonably optimistic about my plant's chances. By spring 2006, however, it was completely defoliated, and I feared the worst. However, it has now grown away from the base of the stem and this winter the shoots have survived so far.

A fourth species, *A. boormannii* was not actually planted out until 2006, but one of several specimens in pots was inadvertently left outside all through the winter of 2005/6. Although sheltered by a group of *Callistemon*, also in pots, I am sure the pot containing the acacia must have been frozen solid on at least one occasion. It was quite a surprise therefore to see this plant grow much more vigorously than those kept in the greenhouse. It has now been planted out, and is still growing well. If it survives further winters outside, it will make a very attractive foliage shrub, with its willowy stems and very narrow phyllodes.

A fifth acacia has been growing, and attempting to break out of, an unheated greenhouse in my parents garden, for over 20 years. Grown from a packet of mixed acacia seed from Chilterns, I am pretty certain that it is *A. melanoxylon*, and that it would have survived outside as well. I know of 50 ft. specimens in an exposed garden on the Isle of Wight, and it has of course become naturalized around the Wirral. I have a couple of cuttings which should be large enough to plant out next year.



Acacia melanoxylon

I cannot end without mentioning one other species, *A. dealbata*. My seedlings are only a few months old, and too small to plant out yet, but until recently a really magnificent specimen could be seen in the front garden of a house alongside the A2

just to the east of Sittingbourne, in North Kent. It was multi-stemmed, and at least 20 ft. high and across. It must have survived a good number of winters undamaged to have reached this size, and was a truly spectacular sight in March when covered in flower. Sadly, a couple of years ago it was cut down, possibly because the owners of the house objected to the shade it cast; or perhaps reputation for invading drains with its roots may have sealed its fate. I miss seeing this wonderful plant, but my ambition now must be to grow something similar!

Jeremy Spon

Acacias in an Oxford Garden

Location : we live very close to the city centre in an old terraced property with a tiny garden, width 18', usable length almost 40'. Part of this space is taken up by a greenhouse 8' x 8', and a summerhouse ca. 8' x 8'. Owing to the way these properties were built, there is an area 17' x 6' which does not get much sun for most of the winter and which is occupied by, a raised bench for overwintering acacias, and a small shed where gardening sundries are various fertilisers etc are stored.

I grow acacia from seed supplied by the Nindethana Seed Service, WA. The garden is on the Oxford flood plain and this winter we have had somewhat difficult conditions with quite hard frosts and a fairly deep snow fall on the 7-8th February which was sufficient to bend the 'trunk' of a young *A. baileyana purpurea* which had been in flower for several weeks. The tips of the branches have been burnt whereas two *pravissima* and a *riceana* seemed to stay upright. A rather tall *retinodes* ca 10/11 feet was a sorry sight despite being attached to two stakes.

Most people have their own method of growing acacia from seed. Mine is a trial and error (failure) system using 5" root trainers. Sow one seed in each compartment in a mixture of ericaceous compost, grit and sand. I don't have a recipe, simply mix roughly 1/3rd of each, going more by colour and texture. Each batch of root trainers are placed in a standard seed tray on a bed of the seed mixture. They are started off in the greenhouse which has a heater with fan suspended from the ridge. There can be mixed results: sometimes this method is successful; sometimes germination can be erratic; *drummondii* and its vars seem to be rather difficult. Problems arise when transplanting seedlings into long tom pots; the roots go everywhere and give of an acrid smell when disturbed. As there are rather a lot of acacias in pots they are removed from the greenhouse once all risk of a frost is past. In the autumn the tender species unlikely to survive the winter are taken back into the greenhouse, and if the weather remains reasonably warm,

the vents are opened and the fan is switched on.

Early in January 2007 I noticed that some of the seedlings in the greenhouse were growing quite nicely and buds were forming. I now have flowering specimens of *drummondii ssp*, 12" high with 14 bright yellow flowers rather like catkins varying between 1/2" - 3/4" long, one *drummondii elegans* 24" high with just 2 pale lemon yellow flowers and *drummondii candolleana* single stem 30" high with flowers of a similar colour. *Drummondii* and its vars especially *elegans* seems to be rather difficult to grow on beyond the transplanting stage.

Amongst acacia in the greenhouse are *kybeanensis, cardiophylla, dealbata*, paradoxa*, riceana* and *baileyana* etc in long toms. Species marked with *, although in the same conditions, some grow more quickly than others. One *riceana* has almost reached the apex of the greenhouse. The main stem is densely covered with sharp spines; the specimen growing in the garden is developing into a shrub. I'm wondering what the spiny monster might be...

Acacia seem to attract pests. *Baileyana* in the garden had an infestation of a 'leaf roller', a perennial nuisance in the greenhouse. Minute snails have made themselves at home in the greenhouse. Once the weather is warmer, I will have to clean and fumigate the benches; only trouble is it will finish off the spiders which are quite useful biological control.

I. Lansbury

Wollemi Weekend

will take place 26-28th May coinciding with the RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

Kernock Park Plants, the UK's only licensed Wollemi Pine grower will be exhibiting a 4.5m tall tree as its central feature in its Jurassic-style garden exhibit at the show. This is the largest Wollemi pine ever seen outside Australia.

There has been a huge interest in the Wollemi pine, with more than 1,000 trees sold prior to Christmas.



Looking for a book?

Try Keith Larkin's book website.

All stock is easy to browse and includes many Australasian and South African books etc.

www.keithsplantbooks.co.uk

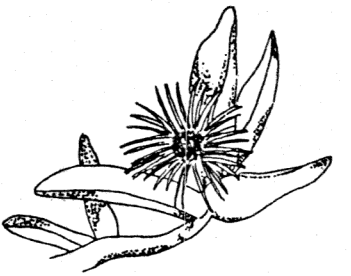
Letters from America #5. October 2005-January 2007.

The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft agley,
An lea'e us nought but grief and pain,
For promised joy!
Robert Burns, To a Mouse.

Negative results can often be very useful, so I hope that my experience with plant loss and survival, as well as the flowering of Calostemma and Pandorea, will be helpful to others.

In the December 2005 issue of Pentachondra I reported my germination and propagation results of 2005 and was looking forward to growing-on the resultant seedlings. Unfortunately, however, 2006 can best be described by the words of Burn's "To a Mouse" (above). In this part of North Carolina the summer of 2006 was the hottest, driest on record, (with long periods of drought), which resulted in the death of many plant species (native and otherwise) including many large, old trees, and damaged agricultural crops. In addition, from a personal point of view, 2006 started with nasty adverse reactions to a medication taken in December 2005; then food poisoning in February (it took me until November 06 to recover from the combined results of these 2 problems); and a broken arm in August. Consequently, I was not able to do much gardening until the late autumn of '06 and I lost a lot of plants, in both the garden and greenhouse. I had the greenhouse cleaned in October and new (clear) insulation installed on the inside of the (glass) walls. The roof is double-walled acrylic so it does not need additional insulation. I've recovered from most of the health problems and just last week I finished stripping and refinishing my kitchen cabinets. Meanwhile I'm looking forward to sowing seeds and gardening again when the warmer weather returns and I have been browsing through my Australasian plant books in anticipation of the arrival of the APS 2007 seed list.

Carpobrotus rossii is a prostrate succulent, commonly known as pigface, which can spread as much as 2m. It has triangular blue-green leaves and purple flowers. The red fleshy fruit was once a favoured food of the aborigines.



To help summarize the 2005-6 germination and plant loss results I expanded the Dec. 2005 table.

Abbreviations: Source of seeds = place/date obtained; APS = Australasian Plant Society; CS = Chiltern Seed; UH = a friend; ex.germ= excellent germination; sp.germ. = Sparse germination; trans.= transplanted; 8/15= August 15th; 10/2= October 2nd, etc (US dating system). 0 indicates no germination as of December 2006.

		2005			2006-07
Species	**source**	**sown**	**germ**	**notes**	**notes**
Alyogyne huegelii	APS05	8/15	9/21	1 seedling	died
Anthoceris littorea	CS01	8/15	0		
Arthropodium candidum	APS01	8/15	0		
Arthropodium cirrhatum	APS01	8/15	8/25	sp.germ	1 alive
Arthropodium milleflorum	APS01	8/15	0		
Arthropodium strictum	APS01	8/15	10/12	ex.germ	dozens alive
Blandfordia grandiflora	APS00	8/15	0		
Blandfordia punicea	APS01	8/15	0		
Billardiera heterophylla pink	APS05	8/16	0		
Billardiera heterophylla blue	APS05	8/16	?	1 seedling	1 alive
Boronia citrodora	APS05	10/2	0	pre-soaking	
Calomeria amaranthoides	APS05	8/15	9/18	sp. germ.	died
Carpobrotus rossii	APS05	8/15	8/19	ex.germ.	pot-full alive
Clematis sp	APS05	8/15	0		
Diplarrena latifolia	APS05	8/16	0		
Eucalyptus laophila	APS05	8/16	8/28	2 seedlings	died
Eucalyptus vernicosa	APS05	8/16	8/24	1 seedling	died
Melaleuca thymifolia	APS05	8/16	8/22	ex.germ.	died
Pandorea pandorana	APS05	8/16	0		
Stypandra glauca	APS05	10/2	0		
Thysanotus dichotomus	APS05	10/2	0		
Thysanotus multiflorus	APS05	10/2	0		
Thysanotus pattersonii	APS04	10/2	0		
Thysanotus thyrsoides	APS05	10/2	0		
Australasian legume species					
Acacia acinacea	APS01	10/2	0		
Acacia costiniana	APS02	10/2	2		2 alive
Acacia buxifolium	APS01	10/2	0		
Acacia sp. Col. Yemen '97	APS05	10/2	10/6	2 from 4 seeds	1 alive
Carmichaelia monroi	APS05	10/2	10/7	ex. germ.	died
Clianthus puniceus (red)	APS01	10/2	10/11	ex. germ.	died
Clianthus puniceus (alba)	APS01	10/2	10/11	ex. germ.	died
Crotalaria cunninghamii	APS99	10/2	10/12		died
Kennedia rubicunda	APS99	10/2	0		
Viminalis juncea	APS00	10/2	10/13		died

Species from the Southern Hemisphere but not Australasia

Species	source	sown	germ	trans	notes	notes
Acnistis australis	CS99	8/15	8/27	10/8.	ex. germ. died	S. America
Bomarea caldasii	CS00	8/15	0			S. America
Bomarea salsilla	CS01	8/15	0			S. America
Melasphaerula ramosa	CS01	8/16	9/16		ex.germ. pot-full	S. Africa
Mutis spinosa	APS05	8/16	8/30		1 seedling died	Chile
Passiflora antioquiensis	CS99	7/26	8/8	8/25	ex.germ. died	Columbia
Pelargonium oblongatum	UH05	8/16	8/29	9/12	ex.germ. 2 alive	S. Africa.
Sandersonia aurantica	CS03	8/16	0			Natal

Seed Viability.

In addition to germination information I try to keep a record of the source and date when I obtain seeds for future reference. The seeds of some species have a very short viable life, but, as can be seen from the table, others will still germinate when they are a number of years old. There is considerable information available on the viable life span of the seeds of many species but it is not always possible to find the information of a particular species when needed. So a personal record can be very handy. A lot of the seeds sown in 2005 were relatively fresh when I sowed them but quite a few of them, such *Arthropodium* and *Melasphaerula,* were 5 year years old or more and still resulted in excellent germination and survival.

Germination notes

Seeds of 42 species were sown during July, August and October of 2005, and the seeds of 20 germinated, many with close to 100% germination. The seedlings that died did so because I could not take care of them and/or extremely high temperatures, not because of disease problems.

Seeds of 22 of the 42 species sown in July, August and October 2005 did not germinate, however, the germination percentage (per pot of seeds) of the 20 species that germinated was much higher than that of seeds sown in the cool spring months of previous years. But the Legume species had a high percentage of germination in the cool October weather. On the other hand seeds of *Stypandra glauca* and 4 species of *Thysanotus* that were also sown in October did not germinate at all. I was particularly disappointed that the seeds of these 2 genera did not germinate because I was very much looking forward to seeing them in flower. The APS Propagation booklet [7] includes a list of species that require high temperatures to germinate. My germination results suggest that some of the species on my list, including Stypandra and Thysanotus, may also require high temperatures. The APS propagation booklet also suggests using 'smoke' with *Thysanotus* seed so I plan to try it this year. I was, of course, also

very, very disappointed to loose the seedlings of so many other species, but at least seedling raised plants can be replaced at a reasonable price.

Incidentally, I highly recommend the APS Propagation booklet [7] mentioned above, it is packed with useful information.

Survival Notes

Despite the inclement weather and unavoidable neglect during 2006 plants of 8 of the species sown in '05 are still alive as of January 20th 2007. These include *Acacia costiniana, Acacia SP* from Yemen, *Arthropodium cirrhatum, Arthropodium strictum, Carpobrotus rossii, Billardiera heterophylla, Melasphaerula ramosa* and *Pelargonium oblongatum.*

Mixed species

Arthropodium cirrhatum. 1 small seedling.
Arthropodium strictum, Several dozen, large, vigorous seedlings.
Carpobrotus rossii. A dozen or so large, vigorous seedlings. They were planted out in the garden last summer, then repotted, and put back into the greenhouse before first frost.
Billardiera heterophylla. One seedling

Legumes

Acacia costiniana 2 small seedlings about 2" high. One has bipinnate foliage the other has simple ovate foliage.
Acacia species from Yemen. 1 seedling about 12" high with bipinnate foliage.

From the Southern Hemisphere but not Australasia.

Melasphaerula ramosa. Several dozen, large vigorous plants.
Pelargonium oblongatum 2 vigorous seedlings, each with a well developed tuberous root.

Potting Mixes and Fertilizers.

My seed and cutting mix of 1-1-1 of coir; course granite grit; and vermiculite, with a drenching of Potassium Permanganate solution (to help prevent fungal problems with young seedlings) has proved to be suitable for germinating the seeds of a wide range of plant species, including those from Australasia. And the potting mix of 1-1-1-1 coir; granite grit; vermiculite; and topsoil plus mycorrhizal fungi has provided an excellent mix for potting-on seedlings and container plants. In the past I have used Osmocote timed released fertilizer pellets as well as Miracle-Gro fertilizer (separately of course not together) for potted plants, and I obtained equally good results with each of them. But this

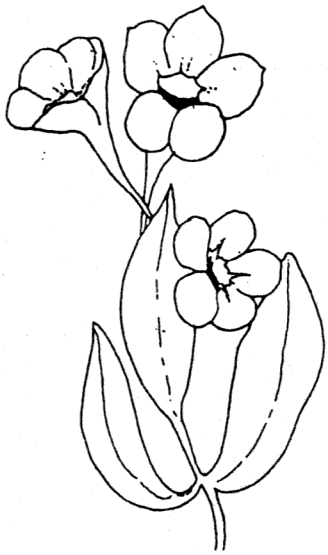
year I am going to try a new Sea Weed fertilizer, 'Maxsea'. I have had good luck with a number of seaweed type fertilizers in the past, when watered onto the potting mix, but none of them had any effect on the plants when sprayed onto the plants. I use Vermiculite in my potting mixes because Perlite has been known to cause leaf burn in certain ornamental species. I plan, however, to try Perlite with some of the species that have consistently failed to germinate.

Mature plants

Calostemma purpurea. This plant is kept in an 8" pot, put out in the summer and back into the greenhouse in the fall. It did not flower in 2006 as it had in previous summers, but produced 3 separate plants. Maybe this was due to the extreme heat and/or my neglect?

Pandorea In response to Sue Kohler's request in Pentachondra May 'o6 for help in flowering *Pandorea jasminoides* (Jasmine Pandorea) I checked my records and some of my books (see list below) for information on the two Australian species of this genus (*P. jasminoides* and *P. pandorana*) in general as well as for my plant in particular. Both of the species are tender and will not stand severe cold or frost [6]. In addition to the specific references noted in the body of the text each of the books listed at the end of this section include helpful information regarding the habitat and/or cultivation of these two species.

Pandorea jasminoides (Jasmine Pandorea) is found in wet areas of the forests and rain forests of coastal Australia and Tasmania. The flowers are 5-6cm across, range from very pale to deep pink with maroon markings in the throat and can be fragrant [5,8].



Pandorea jasminoides

In 2002 I selected and purchased a plant with unusually large pale pink flowers, deep maroon markings in the throat, distinctly frilled petal edges and was very fragrant. It was a small plant and did not grow very much the first year but it flowered all summer. It was over-wintered in the greenhouse and repotted into a 12" pot in the mix described above before I put it out in the spring of '03. Because it comes from damp, shady habitats I put it in a shady spot in the

garden, it grew well but only produced a few flowers that summer. In the springs of '04 and '05 I put the pot on the surface of the South-facing flowerbed, against the house, with the pot behind a low shrub. So that the plant top was in full sun but the pot and roots were shaded. The plant was watered copiously, at least 3 times a week (more when it did not rain), and fertilized bi-monthly until put back into the greenhouse in October before first frost. In both years it grew rapidly to about 10ft (3m) tall and was a mass of flowers from late spring and was still covered in buds and flowers when returned to the greenhouse. I prune the plant back to about 3ft each October. My plant normally flowers from spring to fall so it is not photoperiod sensitive. On the other hand, it is apparently light intensity sensitive because the plant stops forming new buds as soon as it is moved back into the greenhouse (which is shaded) regardless of the date, and it did not flower when I put it out in a shady spot for the summer of '03. Last year (06) it was put out as usual but between the unusually hot summer and my neglect it only grew about 1ft all summer with only a few occasional flowers. Therefore, based on my experience, this species needs constant bright light, moisture and regular fertilizing to encourage flowering. In addition, Howard [6] points out that although this species will flower well in a container it usually makes a mass of foliage with only a few flowers when planted out in the garden of frost-free areas. When I worked in Peru I saw many plants of this species because it is very popular there as a garden plant. Some of the plants seldom flowered and others had very small flowers, which suggests that this species is best purchased when in flower.

Pandorea pandorana (Wonga Wonga Vine) is found in wet shady areas along the coastal regions of Australia and Tasmania. The flowers are 6mm across ranging from cream to brown with brown markings in the throat and there are also yellow flowered horticultural varieties, such as Golden Showers [2,3,8]. I have not been able to obtain plants of this species so far, but I hope to raise some from seed.

References and sources of helpful information.

- 1. Aussie Info Pack 2003. Third edition 2003. Tony Entwistle. Australasian Plant Society. 128p.
- 2. Australian Plants. 1997. T. Ross and J. Irons. Private publication. 307p
- 3. The Australian Native Plant Gardener's Almanac. 1994. J. Blay. Wildlife Preservation, Australia. 144p.
- 4. Climbing Plants. 1983. Kenneth Beckett. Timber Press. Portland, Oregon, USA. 178p.

- 5. Key Guide To Australian Wild Flowers. 1995. 600 species illustrated. Leonard Cronin. Reed Books.191p.
- 6. Landscaping With Vines. 1959. F. Howard. Macmillan, NY. 230p.
- 7. Propagation of Australian and New Zealand Plants. Australasian Plant Society. 17p.
- 8. Wild Flowers of the World. 1970. Illustrations by Barbara Everard and text by Brian Morley. Crescent Books. 432p.

Small Pleasures

Now that the trees in the woods beyond the bottom of my garden have lost their leaves I enjoy watching the resident Barred Owl, in his favourite spot, grooming his feathers each morning. About 2 years ago I purchased a half dead, one shoot plant of Cheddar Pink, it is now over 4ft across and was a highly fragrant mass of pink flowers last spring, and reminded me of Cheddar Gorge (the native home of the species) near Bristol.

PS: I would very much like to obtain seeds of *Rhabdothamnus solandri* from New Zealand. Do any of the members know of a source for them?

PPS: Update on *Melasphaerula ramosa*. A late February look around the greenhouse revealed a pot of *M. ramosa* ready to flower.

Helen Beaufort-Murphy

helen_beaufortmurphy@yahoo.com

WANTED : BUSINESS PARTNER(S) FOR AUSTRALASIAN NURSERY

I need business partners or financial investors for a projected specialist nursery importing & growing on southern hemisphere plants, to be located in west Cornwall. I will do all the cultivation, advertising and marketing, as I have experience from my former mail-order business, Magic Garden Herbs.

Interested? Contact: Morwen M. Tregudda
124 Tottenhall Road
London N13 6DG

Tel: 0208 365 8342

THE INDEX

When I started collecting on my computer all the Australian plant names and references in Pentachondra some years ago, I was driven by my own need not to lose references to plants which I saw as transient (the references, not the plants). I was and am very weak in botany and gardening and constantly need to refer to the writings of others. Publishing it was supported by the Society and it then became of more importance to continue. Whether or not it is useful to the membership is impossible to judge – unless we get feedback from you all, and I'd like you to do that, please.

What's it like to assemble the stuff? Well, entering the data is frankly a boring job, but an Index means just that – a system in which all references to specific Australasian plants should be recoverable. And since that is the remit, I omit references to plants of other origins – unless I fail to recognise them as such (see paragraph 1).

Many articles include lists of beloved plants, some flourishing well, others failing and of course some recently expired. Among the former are always the old favourites – *Prostanthera cuneata, Grevillea* 'Canberra Gem', *Leptospermum scoparium, Eucalyptus gunnii, Phormium tenax* and so on. It's tempting for contributors just to make entries like '*Callistemon spp*' but to me that should mean the author has something useful to say about Callistemons as a whole; once he (or she, you pedants) mentions a species I'm duty bound to record it.

It's less laborious than it used to be. Those old favourites roll off the keyboard almost as if I were a trained typist whereas the rarer species take disproportionate amounts of time, but mostly deservedly. Only names like '*Helichrysum adenophorum* var *waddelliae*' try the spirit. Worst of all, however, are those hellish items in

the magazine which announce the changes decided in distant international botanical head-bashing sessions, like '*Eugenia australis* (*syzygium paniculatum*)' which needs two entries. Indexers of the world, unite! I say. Do we need this stuff?

It's a labour (OK, I don't have to do this, true) to deal with common names like 'Incense plant (*Calomeria amaranthoides*)', or 'Purple heart berry (*Aristotelia peduncularis*)' but I feel that indexing them is more sort of - well, interesting, don't you? Mind you, when someone tells me that a species has about ten local New South Walian names - just don't expect me to rise to that one!

What would make my job easier? Glad you asked. Well, fewer bloody names, for a start, but that's not going to happen. Shorter names, but neither is that. Fewer long lists of 'plants in my garden' which haven't got any idiosyncracies such as strange behaviour or unexpected characteristics. (If you live in Aberdeen and manage to produce a wonderful *Banksia serrata* then tell everybody about it, but *Eucalyptus gunnii* in Cornwall ain't, frankly, interesting - unless it bears grapes.) I love articles which concentrate on a specific experience or specific conditions of cultivation. Articles which enliven the magazine with oddities. Tips on how to recognise similar species. Anything by Tim Longville or Thomas Naylor (but sorry I have no index column for wit). And anything by Jeff Irons of course.

Well, that feels better.

Finally, for those newer members who are in a state of bewilderment by this piece, having never heard of the Index: it's a complete list in alphabetical order of all species of Australasian plant mentioned in Pentachondra since it started. If any member who hasn't got any of the Indexes wishes me to look up these references I'm happy to list them for

him. Just email or write to me. If you have a problem subsequently running to earth articles which were featured in early copies of the magazine, I'm also willing to help, but of course getting a copy to you might be awkward although I now can scan and copy if you can receive email.

Pat Anderson
patma@btinternet.com

Arch Close
Stanwick St John
Richmond
DL11 7RT

An Australian Ardèche Gardener

I have always enjoyed reading news of members' extensive gardens and their adventures with Australasian plants. But I was one of your more passive members; not having a garden of my own. I started with window boxes, gradated to a small and windy fourth floor roof terrace in central London and then (after years of waiting) managed to get half an allotment.

This was fine for growing vegetables, but where was my callistemon hedge? My sweeping shock of *Chorizema cordatum*? And all the while my bedside table reading contained The Australian Garden by Diana Snape and The New Native Garden by Paul Urquhart. Plus treasured issues of Pentachondra. All tempting reading material, but hardly practical.

I am a transplanted Australian, (sown in warmth, but tolerating hard frost) and follow in a long line of enthusiastic gardeners. But I wasn't contributing with just enthusiasm alone.

Suddenly all this yearning and note taking and scheming has come to fruition. I would love to say I have a garden nearby here in London, but instead, I'm moving part-time to France. Starting in June my husband and I will take possession of a pair of French houses in the hills of the Ardeche (550metres) near Vernoux with a whopping 17 acres of terraced hillside.

As gardeners you can imagine how many sleepless nights of thrill this has engendered: plus fear and anxiety. How on earth am I going to manage all this land, and create a great garden of Australian plants?

I would welcome all the advice or seeds you can spare and will be happy to share my adventure (strimming, anyone?) with you.

Lindy Sinclair
lindy@fruitfulresearch.com

The Subantarctic Plant House, Hobart

Any members visiting the Royal Tasmania Botanic Gardens in Hobart should make sure they visit the Subantarctic Plant House. One could easily miss it as this is not a plant house as one would normally envisage. It has solid walls and is lit only through the clear roof while inside state of the art environment control simulates the mist, blasting winds and cool temperatures of Macquarie Island. Macquarie Island lies at 54°30' S about 1500km SE of Tasmania of which it is administratively part. Its climate is thoroughly oceanic with an average temperature of 4.8° varying little with the seasons with rain falling most days and more or less constant wind and cloud cover.

The environment control has allowed the staff of the botanical gardens to grow a good representation of the plants characteristic of six plant communities. The most striking are plants from the coastal slope communities dominated by the large mega herb, *Stilbocarpa polaris* and the large tussock grass *Poa foliosa*. On Macquarie Island *Stilbocarpa* grows into a thick metre-high canopy that is the tallest vegetation on the island and gives shelter for nesting sea birds. Another interesting plant community demonstrated is the mire with mats of vegetation floating in pools of liquid peat. All very different to the Australian plants we are familiar with.

The plants are grown in an attractive display against a diorama of the

Stilbocarpa polaris belongs to a genus restricted to the southern extremity of New Zealand and its subantarctic islands. Commonly known as the Macquarie Island cabbage, it has large soft leaves, often as wide as 50cm, resembing those of rhubarb. The large flowerheads are composed of masses of small, yellowish-green flowers.

rugged terrain of the island. As one stands in the cold air constantly flowing from five vents a commentary tells how as autumn comes the light intensity drops sharply and days become very short. This is not a welcome thought when one is shortly to return to a home situated a bit north of 54°N, as no amount of global warming or North Atlantic drift will alter day length or the elevation of the sun. Global warming has apparently not left Macquarie Island alone; warmer winters as well as the eradication of feral cats has led to an explosion of rabbit numbers and the problems that implies.

Mike Ashford

Many thanks to all contributors.

- Articles are now required for the December issue.
- Articles can be sent on disk or emailed.
- Typewritten reports are welcome as are short handwritten reports but please print place/botanical names.

- Send contributions to Sue Hyams, Applegarth, Knayton, Thirsk, YO7 4AS.
- Email: sue.hyams@ic24.net
- Tel: 01845 537407

Open Gardens

The garden of Barley Mow, Moor Monkton, York is open under the National Garden Scheme (Yellow Book) on Sunday 12 August 2007 (11.00-6.00). This is the garden of Mike Ashford, an APS member, and his wife Isobel. It includes some Australasian plants but much else. Of course August is not the ideal time for displaying Australasian shrubs but Mike would be pleased if any APS member visiting the garden would make themselves known to him. If any APS members are visiting York area at other times, he would be pleased for them to arrange a visit to Barley Mow (tel 01904 738384).

It would be good to hear of any other members' gardens open under the National Garden Scheme or any other scheme.

Deadline for next issue

October 1st

CONTACTS

President	Jeff Irons 'Stonecourt' 74 Brimstage Road Heswall Wirral CH60 1XG Tel : 0151 342 1703
Chairman & Webmaster	Keith Larkin Chadshunt House 5a Lillington Road Leamington Spa Warks CV32 5YS Tel : 01926 422596 Email : webmaster@anzplantsoc.org.uk
Secretary	Nicky Zanen 16 South Close Barnet EN5 5TP Tel : 07950 428527 Email : nicky.zanen@fsa.gov.uk
Treasurer	Dr. A.J. Entwistle 'Ophrys' 113 Station Road Delamere Cheshire CW8 2HZ Tel : 01606 882306 Email : Tonyentwistle@doctors.org.uk
Newsletter Editor and Producer	Sue Hyams 'Applegarth' Knayton Thirsk N. Yorkshire YO7 4AS Tel : 01845 537407 Email : sue.hyams@ic24.net
Seed Manager	Richard Christmas Osborne House Wrexham Road Pen-y-ffordd Chester CH4 0HT Email : morayacacia@aol.com

COPYRIGHT (C) AUSTRALASIAN PLANT SOCIETY
www.anzplantsoc.org.uk



Xerochrysum subundulatum