PENTACHONDRA

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Olearia myrsinoides
at Dundee Botanic Garden

AUSTRALASIAN PLANT SOCIETY

Promoting the cultivation and conservation of Australasian plants, and their closest relatives, in northern hemisphere gardens

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APS NEWS

From the Chairman

The strange weather patterns of last year have certainly continued into 2023 with a combination of droughts and floods continuing to challenge our ability to grow our favourite plants. Further to my report in the last issue, sadly my 6ft (1.8m) tall (and expensive) *Dicksonia antarctica* did not survive although hopefully I will be able to use the trunk as a support for growing orchids on once it has been transferred into the greenhouse.

Apart from that I have come out relatively unscathed. All of my National Collection of *Lophomyrtus* have grown back well (as have my South American myrtles) and I have even been able to add a few new accessions to them. My Melaleucas have put on new growth from the base so hopefully will be fine unless we get another bad winter. Sadly my *Grevillea rosemarinifolia* 'Jenkinsii' did not recover, nor did my 10ft (3m) tall *Pseudopanax crassifolius* (my much smaller plant grown from the same seed batch was untouched). Small losses compared to some members but at least it gives me a small area in which to plant new acquisitions!

Our combined APS/Hebe Society display at Hampton Court was, I think, a great success. We were awarded an RHS Silver Medal, made approximately £500 for the APS from sales of Australasian plants and attracted several new members. The major RHS shows are however a big commitment with 11 days devoted to setting up and manning the display, not to mention all the attendant RHS paperwork in the months leading up to it. We have decided therefore not to commit to any RHS shows in 2024 but instead to concentrate on more local one and two day shows.



Gary Firth

The APS stand at Hampton Court

Some of the team at Hampton Court



Gill Groombridge

The Great Dixter Plant Fair this year was another very enjoyable and quite profitable show for us and we hope to attend this again in 2024 together, possibly, with events at Borde Hill Gardens and Leonardslee Gardens in Sussex. I now have arrangements with a wholesale plant nursery which is very willing to supply us with liners of Australasian plants in relatively small quantities which we are able to grow and sell on in addition to the more unusual plants grown by members.



The APS stand at Great Dixter

Hilary Spon

Following discussions at our last AGM we have arranged to hold the 2024 AGM at a different venue for us in the hope that this will make it more accessible for members from other areas of the country. Details are provided elsewhere in this journal and we hope to be able to see many of you there at the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens. If successful we may alternate between Lullingstone Castle and an alternative venue for all future AGMs.

Gary Firth

Events 2024

RHS Wisley Gardens, Surrey

Monday 18th March, 10.30am

Wisley RHS horticulturalist and APS member Hugo Danckwerts has kindly offered to provide a behind the scenes tour of some of the Australasian delights to be found there, including Australian epiphytic and lithophytic orchids, some of the Australian pelargoniums, the *Macrozamia* plant bed in the main display area, their Australasian pot grown specimens and some general sub-tropical and tropical Australasian plants around the glasshouse.

APS AGM and visit to Sir Harold Hillier Gardens, Hampshire

Monday 15th April.

The next AGM of the Australasian Plant Society will take place in Jermyns House, Sir Harold Hilliers Gardens by kind permission of Barry Clarke, Botanist, Plant Records Officer and Student Coordinator. Barry has also kindly offered to give a lecture and a guided tour of some of the Australasian wonders of the garden afterwards. We hope that this new venue for 2024 will enable more APS members to attend the meeting. We also hope that we may be able to organise a parallel Zoom session for the AGM.

Plant Fairs

Borde Hill Gardens, Haywards Heath, West Sussex

Sunday 12th May (provisional) and Sunday 15th September (provisional)

The APS will have a sales stand at the Borde Hill Gardens Plant Fairs (subject to space availability). Listed by English Heritage as being of Grade II historic importance and set within 383 acres of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty on the High Weald, Borde Hill is of national botanical importance and features one of the largest collections of privately-owned champion trees in the UK, with over 70 specimens. Many specimens are original material grown from seed brought back by some of the great plant hunters, including Kingdom Ward, Rock, Wilson and Forrest.

Leonardslee Lakes and Gardens, Horsham, West Sussex

Sunday 16th June (provisional)

The APS will have a sales stand at this brand new plant fair. In 2019, Leonardslee Lakes and Gardens opened its doors after a closure of 10 years. This magnificent Grade I listed garden was nearly lost forever and has been the subject of the largest garden restoration in England. It has one of the best collections of Rhododendrons, Camellias and Magnolias in the country, including a Plant Heritage National Collection of Loderi and Leonardslee Rhododendrons.

Hole Park, Rolvenden, Cranbrook, Kent

Sunday 18th August (provisional)

We will have a stand at the Hole Park Plant Fair. This is one of the best-known gardens in Kent, a winner of Visit Kent's Garden of the Year award in 2016. Four generations of the Barham family have created a wonderful 16 acre garden in a magical parkland setting.

Other events currently being considered for 2024 include a visit to Wakehurst Place and the Great Dixter Rare Plant Fair.

Email reminders including final details will be sent out to all members with an email address nearer the time of the event. If you do not use electronic communications please let Judy Clark know and she will arrange for information to be posted to you.

For further information about any of these events please contact Gary and Maria Firth at **chairman@anzplantsoc.org.uk** or telephone 01444 413626.

Seedlist news

Members will be aware that rule changes following Brexit mean that purchasing seeds from Australia and New Zealand is now more expensive than it used to be; involves more paperwork, including a phytosanitary certificate; and there is less choice because some companies will no longer supply seed to the UK. This



Judy Clark

***Libertia cranwelliae* seed pods**

means that donations to the seedlist are needed more than ever. If you have saved seed from your plants, or have seed leftover from past purchases, please send it to APS seed manager Janet Miller; her address can be found inside the back cover. Seed donors get an extra packet of seeds from the seedlist for each species donated.

For some years the APS seedlist has included a New Zealand Iris, *Libertia grandiflora*. The seed was purchased in good faith from New Zealand Tree Seeds. Judy Clark raised some plants and the seed has turned out to be from the similar *Libertia cranwelliae*. One of the obvious differences between the two species is the size and shape of the seed capsule. large (more than 20mm

Do you know you can access back copies of Pentachondra in the members section of the APS website? If you don't have a password contact Ben Ram at webmaster@anzplantsoc.org.uk.

Please do not forget to tell us if your postal or email address changes - we do not want you to miss out on an edition of Pentachondra or Society emails!

long) and barrel-shaped in *L. cranwelliae*, smaller and teardrop shaped in *L. grandiflora*.

While working on the 2024 seedlist I noticed that the wattle *Acacia cyanophylla* is listed. This is an old name for *Acacia saligna*, the golden wreath wattle.

Can you help to organise an APS get together in your area?

Many of the APS committee members (including Chairman, Membership Secretary and Treasurer, and Pentachondra editor) are based in the south east of the UK. This inevitably makes it more difficult for us to organise events in other parts of the country, much as we like to do so.

Does your garden hold sufficient interest that you would be able to host a small meeting of local APS members? Or perhaps you are familiar with a local garden or park growing Australasian plants that would be of interest but don't want to do the organising bit.

If so, please let us know and we will do our best to contact local APS members on your behalf or put them in direct contact with you (whilst observing all relevant data protection requirements) so that we can arrange a possible visit. We may even be able to make the arrangements with your local garden if you do not wish to do so.

Please contact Gary and Maria Firth or one of the other committee members (contact details are inside the back cover) if you think you could host such an event for like-minded members.

Photography competition

Now that we have a date for the AGM we also have a deadline for the APS photography competition. For digital entries it is April 1st (this is not a joke!) and for printed entries it is April 14th. (The difference is to allow time for entries to be printed before the AGM on the 15th April.)

However, you don't have to wait to send an entry. Photos can have been taken at any time, not just during the past year. Maybe the festive period will give you time to sort through your photographs, and if you can't find a shot that pleases you, well, there's plenty of time to take one. There are four categories; surely you can find something in your garden or greenhouse or conservatory that would fit into one of them.

The categories are:

1. Individual plant (whole or part) of Australasian origin growing in the northern hemisphere.

2. Close up of any plant of Australasian origin showing diagnostic features (for example, leaves or flowers), taken anywhere in the world.

3. Group of Australasian plants in a garden, anywhere in the world.

4. Australasian plants in a landscape in Australia or New Zealand (including islands that form part of the country).

Please send digital entries as jpeg files to **editor@anzplantsoc.org**, to arrive no later than 1st April 2024. Send prints (A5 size) to Judy Clark, 36 Collier Road, Hastings, East Sussex TN34 3JR, to arrive no later than 14th April 2024. Or you can bring your print to the AGM.

For digital entries please include your name, entry category and photograph title in the name of your jpeg file. For

printed entries write this information on the reverse side of the print.

Photographs will be displayed at the AGM without the title or name of the photographer. Attendees will be able vote for their favourite image in each category, and each winner will get a prize. Winning photos will be printed in the May 2023 issue of Pentachondra.

Finally, just a quick reminder of the rules.

1. Only photographs taken by current APS members and not used elsewhere will be accepted.

2. Entries are limited to two per member per category.

3. The competition is free to enter.

4. Members do not need to be present at the AGM to enter the competition.

Please note that while copyright of images will remain with the photographer, the APS claims the right to exhibit the entries, to use them to further its aims generally and to promote the APS and its photography competition. This includes publishing photos in APS publications, on the website, or on social media. All published photographs will be credited. The APS also claims the right to edit or use images in combination with others.

Subscriptions are due!

Subscriptions for those who did not join via the website are due on **1st January 2024**. A renewal form is enclosed with this issue for those whose membership is not automatically renewed by Paypal or by bank standing order. Annual subscriptions are £15 for members resident in the UK and £18 for members resident elsewhere.

If you pay by standing order or Paypal, or you have already paid for 2024, you do not need to do anything, **unless** any of your details have changed. If so, please contact Treasurer Jeremy Spon directly at **membership@anzplantsoc.org.uk**.

If you are resident in the UK and would like to pay by bank transfer (which we prefer, as we are not charged any fees for such payments) instead of Paypal or better still would like to set up a standing order for an annual payment, our bank details are:

Bank: Natwest
Account Name: Australasian Plant Society
Sort Code: 60-19-24
Account Number: 29872677

Write for Pentachondra

Many thanks to everyone who has taken the time to contribute to this issue. It is particularly encouraging to receive so many articles from members who have not previously contributed, and from some very new members at that. Please do consider contributing - everyone has something worthwhile to share.

The deadline for the next issue is 1st April 2024. Length is not important, and if you don't fancy writing an article photographs on their own are welcome, as are drawings, as long as they come with a caption. Please send text as a word document or similar (not as a pdf) and send photographs separately as jpgs (and don't compress them). If you have any questions at all about contributing please don't hesitate to contact Judy Clark at **enquiries@anzplantsoc.org.uk**.

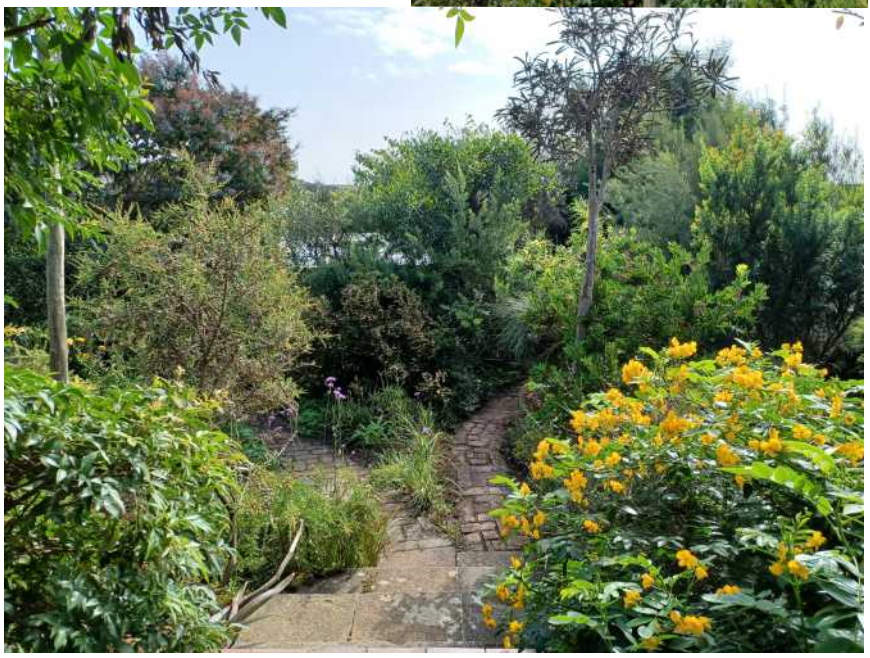
APS VISIT TO HASTINGS

Jeremy Spon

It had been a few years since I last saw our Editor, Judy Clark's garden, so the visit she organised for members last September was a good opportunity to catch up on developments and new plantings there. And it was certainly worth making the journey to Hastings, because many existing plants had grown into substantial specimens, and Judy had planted many new species as well. Eight members, plus a few friends and relatives, were shown round a packed back garden, which is a testament both to Judy's fascination with experimenting in growing Australasian plants



Hilary Spon



Views of Judy Clark's garden, with,above right, *Pseudopanax crassifolius* and above *Senna corymbosa*

outdoors, and to the relatively benign climate she enjoys. Certainly many of the plants she grows would not survive an average winter in my garden, or I suspect in those of many other members; here, they have not only survived but thrived.

Plants I made a note of (some because I have grown them in the past but lost them, and would very much like to try again and to succeed with) included *Grevillea semperflorens*, *Acacia boormanii*, *Goodia latifolia*, *Hymenosporum flavum* and *Hibbertia aspera*. But there were many other highlights, including *Banksia ericifolia* in flower, and a towering *Pseudopanax crassifolius*, which made for an engrossing tour – profuse thanks must go to Judy for her hospitality, enthusiasm and knowledge.

Many thanks also to Owen Johnson VMH of The Tree Register of the British Isles who, after lunch, led us on a tour of Alexandra Park, which lies in a sheltered valley towards the western end of Hastings. It has an impressive collection of rare and unusual trees, many of great stature, and Owen has been adding to this over the last few years with new plantings, including some from the southern hemisphere. As with Judy's garden, there are plants here which would otherwise survive outdoors only in the mildest parts of the south and west of the UK, one of the most unexpected being *Afrocarpus falcatus*, a member of the Podocarpaceae from Southern Africa, supplied as a (mis-labelled) substitute for another Podocarp which was unavailable in an order from Burncoose nursery. All in all this was just the sort of day which most closely aligns with the aims of the APS, providing a chance to see the plants we are all interested in, and share knowledge about and experience of growing them.

EXPERIENCES OF LAST WINTER - FROM NORTH TO SOUTH

Australasian Plants in my garden in Callander, Scotland

Henry 'Chip' Lima

My garden in Callander, Scotland (north west of Stirling) is in a relatively cold area with the extreme cold of -19^{o}C in 2010 being uncharacteristically low. Most winters have a low temperature of -8^{o}C to -12^{o}C. The winter of 2022/23 was fairly mild with the lowest temperature being only -8^{o}C, but there were other factors that were damaging to the plants in my garden that winter.

We didn't have a drought in summer 2022, and October 2022 was very mild and wet and this left plants in a soft and vulnerable condition. In November the temperature fell to -8^{o}C and stayed below freezing for a week. Every week or two there was another short series of frosts. This continued right into April when we had -6^{o}C, by which time I started to see damage to plants.

My garden is on an east facing slope and the soil is highly organic which doesn't suit a lot of Australian plants, but it's better suited to many New Zealand plants.

The only plants in the protea family that I've had any success with are *Telopea truncata* and *Embothrium coccineum*. I grew both from seed and the Embothrium is now 6m tall, but the Telopea it is still less than a metre tall and hasn't flowered. I've grown *Grevillea victoriae*, *G . rosemarinifolia* and a hybrid but all



Henry Lima

Henry's front garden
- with *Eucalyptus kybeanensis* and *Olearia x oleifolia*

of them have died due to the combination of winter wet and the highly organic soil. This past winter killed them outright, roots and all. No banksias or proteas have survived in this garden.

I've had more luck growing plants from the myrtle family. I've grown several species of *Eucalyptus* and none of them has ever been damaged by -12°C . Over the years I've grown *Eucalyptus kybeanensis*, *E. perriniana*, *E. stellulata* and *E. gunnii* cultivars 'France Bleu' and 'Azura'. I pollard all of them to fit in with my relatively small garden. Contrary to what is recommended in the south, I don't prune them in early spring. I find that if I do that and we have a late spring frost then the plant can die. I prune them severely in late May. Most tea trees have not survived in my garden, but *Leptospermum lanigerum* and *L.* 'Silver Sheen' have survived although they have been damaged. By March 2023 *L. lanigerum* was discoloured and by May only a small branch from the base was alive and grew. I don't grow any bottle brushes.

Pseudopanax crassifolius has thrived for 17 years including the awful winter of 2010. It stands over 4m tall in my front garden and it always reminds me of Dr Seuss' illustrations of a tree, a ball on a stick. It originally came from



Henry Lima

Pseudopanax crassifolius in Callander

Bransford nursery in 2008. I wish I had bought more. It remained in the juvenile leaf form for 10 years, and the adult leaves are smaller each year. There's no sign of flowering yet.

Another favourite in my garden is *Eucryphia lucida* 'Pink Cloud'. In my garden it flowers from June into November and the flowers are a deeper pink than the cultivar 'Ballerina'. In 2010 it had some stem dieback but there's been no damage since. The bees love it.

I have quite a few southern hemisphere conifers. My mountain celery pine *Phyllocladus alpinus* came from Derek Spicer and it has never suffered any damage in 20 years. It is remarkable I think that Wollemi Pine (*Wollemia nobilis*) has never been damaged, not even with -17°C in 2010. Mine is now 4m tall and so far it has only had male cones. My Tasmanian pencil pine *Athrotaxis x laxifolia* (a natural hybrid) is slow growing, only reaching 1.5m in 15 years, but it hasn't been damaged by any winters here either.

Sometimes I wish I'd never planted blue star creeper, *Pratia pedunculata* (synonym *Lobelia pedunculata*) . It is too happy here, just like the pirri-pirri burr (*Acaena novae-zelandiae*) that is all over our hills in the Trossachs. It is lovely, and looks good with black mondo grass, but it is so invasive!

In 2010 I spent 5 days on Tiree and saw an Olearia flowering well despite the previous winter low temperatures of -14°C there. I rooted some cuttings, and I am still not sure of its correct name. I thought it was 'Talbot de Malahide' but that one appears to be too green compared to what I have. I do think it is an *O. x oleifolia* type. It's never had any damage. On 14th May 2021 the temperature fell to -6°C. That killed *O. lacunosa* and *O.* 'Henry Travers'. Other daisy family plants that have



Henry Lima

Eucryphia lucida 'Pink Cloud'



Henry Lima

Corokia cotoneaster 'Little Prince'

done well include *Brachyglottis bidwillii*, *B. monroi* and *B.* Silver Dormouse.

Corokia cotoneaster 'Little Prince' has never been damaged by cold here and sets berries regularly. Its relative *C. x virgata* 'Welsh Whisky' wasn't damaged this past winter of 2022 either. However cultivar 'Banana Royal' was damaged, with stem dieback by half. After 6 months it still doesn't look right; one for the cold greenhouse. I was advised that they were hardy to -9ºC, but that depends.

Occasionally I still see a *Cordyline australis* standing tall in this neighbourhood, but almost all of them were cut to the ground by winter cold. Strangely enough two of them are in large pots, so drainage is an issue. My *C. australis* 'Torbay Dazzler' is coming back from the base; it is 15 years old.

I have a lot of hebes (*Veronica*) but I'll keep it brief. Almost every variegated type was killed in the ground and didn't come back from the roots. Most large leaf types were the same. I have some seedlings of *Hebe* 'Midsummer Beauty' and *H. salicifolia* that are alive. I've lost faith in the horticultural trade that keeps selling these plants as hardy and they are not. I wish there was a trial garden in a cold area, not Wisley or Harlow Carr, that would tell us a lot more about which hebes are hardy. I was pleased to hear that most of the hebes died at the trial garden in Wisley. Maybe that will help to make a change in the perpetuation of these plants that are not fit for the cooler part of the UK.

I hope this short article inspires more people in the northern parts of the UK to try some of the hardier southern hemisphere plants.

Casualties and survivors of winter 2022-23 in Stockport

Tamsin Taylor

My garden is in Stockport (Greater Manchester) where last winter we experienced extreme temperatures not seen since 2010. In mid-December we had 3 consecutive nights of -8ºC and during the day it was -2º or -3ºC, so the plants were effectively frozen solid for all that time.

A beauty, my *Cordyline australis*, had regrown since winter 2010 when all of the plant above ground level was destroyed by the cold. It succumbed to sub-zero temperatures again and had to be chopped down in March when it began to rot (and smell awful!). No new suckers have appeared yet. All the phormiums in pots didn't make it either.

Pseudopanax crassifolius (lancewood) is as high as the house now; planted in the ground, it is at least 5m tall. I thought it was dying as the leaves kept falling off but since May new leaves have appeared in abundance; it may be the adult leaves replacing the juvenile foliage. The new leaves are much



Tamsin Taylor

Pseudopanax crassifolius with P. ferox, July 2023

shorter. *P. ferox* (fierce lancewood) is planted next to it. It's a bit more sheltered amongst the other plants and has grown plenty of new leaves so far this year. But *P. crassifolius* var. *trifoliatus* and *P. lessonii*, both 1.5 m tall and in the ground several years, have lost all their foliage and I believe them to be dead.

My wollemi pine has been in the ground for 10 years or more. I have been able to protect it with a fleece jacket during previous winters. Now, at more than 2.5m, it is too tall for me to do that, even with the aid of stepladders, so I left it to its own devices last winter. The ends of the branches were burnt by frost and the needles turned brown but there has been plenty of new growth since then.

There are some shoots coming from the base and some emerging from the trunk. It has survived for now.

Callistemon subulatus has never been as good as this year . The wire netting bush, *Corokia cotoneaster*, flowered well this year too.

My tree ferns are all in pots so I am able to move them into a bubble-wrapped insulated greenhouse where they have had fleece over them and a paraffin heater to keep the worst of the cold away, although it struggled sometimes to keep temperatures above zero when outside it was freezing. The *Dicksonia antarctica* specimens are all fine but one *D. squarrosa* has died. *D. fibrosa* is fine, as are *Cyathea australis* and *C. medullaris*. *C. cooperi* lost all its fronds and shows no sign of life after surviving many winters in a



Tamsin Taylor

Callistemon subulatus July 2023



***Cordyline australis* in Tamsin's back garden June 2021**

large pot in the greenhouse. *C. dealbata* has not lost all its fronds but seems to be dormant. I keep feeding and watering it and it is outside now but no new growth at all has appeared as I write this (July).

I have potted specimens of restios, and *Banksia*, *Melaleuca* and *Acacia* species, all grown from APS seed. They are in another greenhouse and unless they get too big they will probably never be put outside, apart from the restios which go outdoors in the summer.

I grew several plants of *Eucalyptus morrisbyi* from APS seed a few years ago. I planted one in my front garden and put one in a pot. The potted one died following this last winter, and the one in the garden appeared to have died. I cut it down and now it

Tamsin Taylor



Tamsin's back garden July 2023

appears to be regrowing from the lignotuber. I gave my daughter two of these trees when they were small and she planted them in her garden which is near the Wash in Lincolnshire. Both trees are thriving still. Her garden is very windy and exposed, and maybe she didn't get as much frost as we had in Stockport.

There is a large Norfolk Island pine (*Araucaria heterophylla*) in the big greenhouse too. I have to keep cutting the top off as it reaches the roof, but I have been able to get some of the cuttings to root. They are growing very slowly.

I hope you enjoyed reading about my collection of Australasian plants and the trials of growing them in the north west of England. It is a challenge, but an agreeable challenge for me when the successes outweigh the failures!

Postscript, November: *Eucalyptus morrisbyi* out in the garden did not regrow from the base of the trunk but fortunately I still have a couple of plants in my greenhouse. The phormiums did not regrow but the cordylines which were cut down have made many new pups at the base. The Wollemi pine made lots of new growth this year so the brown needles from last winter are not as noticeable. Banksias (*B. spinulosa* 'Birthday Candles') grown from APS seed a few years ago are flowering amazingly well in my greenhouse at the moment, but I wouldn't risk planting them out where I live. The tree ferns are all doing well too. I have put them back under cover for winter now. They have enjoyed a lot of rain in recent weeks!

North Wales: survivors of winter 2022-23

Ben Ram

In December 2022, while hiding from the world due to a bad cough/cold, an arctic blast saw temperatures dip down to -7°C in Llanberis. Nothing was fleeced as we were not fit for venturing outside. This is significant as it is the coldest we have seen since starting the garden in 2011, when we recorded -6°C. Needless to say there were many deaths as a result, so many in fact that I will not list them. Instead, let's concentrate on the survivors.

Banksia paludosa, *B. spinulosa* 'Son Of Skyscraper', *B. intergiifolia* subsp. *integriifolia* and *Lambertia formosa* got cut down but eventually resprouted in the summer. In pots, up against the house, *Banksia serrata* and *B.* 'Birthday Candles' were not affected at all but in the ground *B. serrata* died. The 4m tall *Banksia marginata* got cut to the ground and took until September to sprout from the base.

Our *Wollemia nobilis*, which is now taller than the apex of our two storey house, was a little scorched but went on to produce both male and female cones as has now become normal. *Sophora howinsula* not only survived, but subsequently flowered really well over the summer! Equally surprising is *Schefflera digitata* which also thrived and has now flowered at over 2m tall. *Berberidopsis beckleri* was damaged but has resprouted from the base. We forgot two *Agathis australis* (kauri) outside in airpots but these did not flinch and have subsequently been planted out.

Knightia excelsa suffered a lot of damage to the leaves and small branches. It looked terrible for ages but is now starting to come back. Growth didn't start until June!

Of our ferns, *Dicksonia fibrosa* and *D. antarctica* had very minor browning of fronds but were basically ok. Fronds of *D. squarrosa*, however, were desiccated. *Leptopteris*, and *Blechnum mochaenum* from South America, were fine under the decking slats but, in a less sheltered position, the fronds of *B. nudum* went black, though it eventually resprouted. *B. wattsii* was fine over winter but a spring drought made the fronds go crispy. *B. discolor* was badly affected but started to sprout by mid June. *Pteris umbrosa* got cut back to ground but resprouted well. Amazingly, *Blechnum montanum* was fine throughout - this fern should be more widely grown in mild areas with higher humidity. *Doodia media* and *D. cordata* were cut back but are coming back. As has become usual, *Histiopteris incisa* went dormant in the winter and came back fine. *Todea barbara* was fine and *Blechnum*



Ben Ram

Telopea oreades

novae-zelandiae suffered only minor scorch and are doing very well.

Our *Callistemon pallidus* did not get affected at all and is now almost 3m high and flowered its socks off! *Richea scoparia* was equally unbothered. The newest, most tender leaves on *Cordyline indivisa* blackened but it is now romping away. Above it, the most exposed leaves and small branches of *Metrosideros umbellata* suffered a lot over the winter and, though it is resprouting, still looks odd. The waratahs didn't mind the winter at all and flowered really well. In the ground we have *Telopea truncata*, *T. oreades*, *T. speciosissima* and a hybrid. *Eucryphia moorii* and *E. miliganii* were fine, as was *Nothofagus moorii*. Although many grevillias in pots outside died, *Grevillea diminuta* and *G.* 'Big Red' are fine.

In late spring and early summer we had a period of no rain for six weeks. Although *Pseudopanax chathamicus* and *Olearia angustifolia* both sailed through the winter, this drought killed the former and the latter only survived due to regular watering.

I will briefly mention our South African Proteaceae as they are related and some members also grow them. All the plants in pots outside were killed and most in the ground died too. The ones that survived were mostly growing under or near larger plants that provided shelter; for example, one *Protea punctata* survived in a sheltered position while three died in more exposed sites. Oddly, one *Leucadendron gandogeri* in an exposed position survived while just next to it one died. Two plants of *Protea cynaroides* from our own high altitude wild collections survived in sheltered positions but others died. Of the many *Leucadendron spissifolium* we have planted, all suffered but it was those in a more exposed site that subsequently resprouted. The sheltered ones died. The snow proteas in the ground are in an exposed position and are fine.

All of this death may be hard to see but it allows us space to plant new and exciting things as well. Sometimes the plants do this job for us. In September, around the time of the equinox, while doing some planting out, we noticed some Proteaceae seedlings germinating in the garden where *Leucadendron uliginosum* had been and then again in a different area where *Leucadendron rourkei* had been. We had plants of both sexes flower at the same time a couple of years ago and when they died the cones opened, releasing their seeds. It seems the strategy they have for surviving fire by reseeding also works for frost!

Australasian Plants, winter 2022-23, south Oxfordshire

Graham Sumner

As I am sure is the case for many others, winter 2022/23 challenged the Australasian species in my garden. This was particularly so for the first of the winter's three cold snaps. There was a night-time frost on each successive night from the 6th to the 17th December, based on data from my garden weather station (see Table 1 below). I have taken weather readings in my garden wherever I have lived. Where I live now, Harwell, Oxfordshire, is no exception. Once a climatologist, always a climatologist - a bit like riding a bike! The garden is on the northern slope of the North Wessex Downs, on the edge of the chalk, above the rest of the village and away from the coldest clay soils of the Thames valley to the north. Therein lies RAF Benson, which is regularly one of the coldest locations in the south Midlands on winter nights; generally a couple of degrees lower than I record at about 90m above sea level. However, I cut my teeth on experimenting with growing Australian plants way back in the late '80s on the west coast of Wales, the hobby having been inspired by numerous extended visits to Australia to research its rainfall and natural environments. I started growing Australasians in Oxfordshire after moving here nearly nine years ago.

What marked out this spell last winter as exceptional was that for the first time in many years, near-zero or sub-zero temperatures persisted by day from the 11th to the 14th December. Damage wreaked then was compounded by further marked cold periods from the the 16th to the 24th January, and a further one in February. I was away for February and all I have are overall maxima and minima for the month: 16.2°C and -4.2°C respectively. With only 5.2mm of rain in February, challenges of a different kind emerged for many of my Australians in large terracotta pots! I came back to one, an *Acacia verniciflua* (varnish wattle), compost totally desiccated, plant bleached white … and distinctly dead! Many of my

December	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	13th	14th	15th	16th	17th
Maximum	9.8	7.9	6.8	6.1	7.6	-0.4	0.2	0.9	-0.1	3.7	3.2	6.5
Minimum	-0.8	-2.8	-5.1	-3.6	-5	-1.7	-3.7	-5.6	-7.1	-6.6	-6.5	-3.2
Grass minimum	-2.2	-4.4	-6.1	-5.5	-6.4	-3.2	-4.9	-6.7	-8.3	-8.1	-7.8	-5.4

January	16th	17th	18th	19th	20th	21st	22nd	23rd	24th	25th
Maximum	5.5	1.7	7.8	8	9.4	0.6	3.7	7.4	7.4	5.6
Minimum	-6.6	-5.1	-2.1	-1.7	-3.2	-7.9	-4.6	-6.1	-4.6	-0.1
Grass minimum	-7.2	-5.4	-3.9	-3.3	-4.5	-8.7	-5.3	-7.1	-5.6	-0.6

Table 1. Maximum, minimum and grass minimum temperatures, Harwell, Oxfordshire,
cold snaps, December 2022 and January 2023.

Australians are kept in pots as I have found this generally prevents the often fatal pairing of low temperatures and water-logged roots in our clay soils by permitting thorough drainage. When I returned on 1st March, the compost in all pots was almost bone dry, but the Acacia was the only fatality. As our soils are rather alkaline I have also had to be choosy in which Austral(as)ians I plant in the ground, so, many newly grown from seed since living here are also kept in pots for as long as size permits.

So, how about the plants? Those largely holding their own, and not mentioned in this text, appear in Table 2. Of the rest, apart from the death cited earlier, few Australasians turned up their toes after last winter. Some though were damaged, and in many of these the damage came to light slowly through the ensuing spring and summer. Fatalities in the ground included two *Eucalyptus perriniana* (spinning gum), raised from seed in 2016 and already about five metres tall; beautiful slender beasts which dominated the centre of the front garden.The photo shows them bedecked in a dense hoar frost during the January cold spell. Careful study will reveal that the foliage was already brown from the December cold. One of these has since produced prodigious growth from its lignotuber, as the photo taken in early August shows.

The other losses were a *Eucalyptus pulchella* (white peppermint), already a rather sickly specimen, and nearly all the small-leaved, more compact, hebes. A single small and very slow-growing *Eucalyptus parvula* (small-leaved gum, see box on next page) survived; indeed it has grown better through the summer just gone than in previous years.



Graham Sumner

***Eucalyptus perriniana* January 2023**



***Eucalyptus perriniana* regrowing from lignotuber**

Small-leaved gum

Plants change their scientific names for various reasons. In this case, the name was already in use but the person who originally described and named small-leaved gum in 1909, Australian botanist and surveyor Richard Hind Cambage, didn't know. When, much later, it was realised that the name Eucalyptus parvifolia had been given to a fossil species in 1895, the name could no longer be used for the living species that was discovered later. So it became Eucalyptus parvula.

E. parvula is regarded as endangered in its native habitat, the Southern Tablelands of New South Wales, where it grows at high altitudes, preferring damp cold sites on grassy plains. Known in the UK as the Kybean gum, it has received the RHS Award of Garden Merit.

Judy Clark



Graham Sumner

Callistemon pallidus

Many plants growing in garden soil seem to have been radically weakened after last winter. Most upsetting of these has been a 2m tall *Callistemon pallidus* (lemon bottlebrush), growing in the ground against a south-facing house wall. The photo shows it flowering in early June last year. This was grown from seed collected from a specimen I grew in Wales and was seven years old. This spring, although many leaves had been blackened through the winter, it bravely flowered, though not as profusely and later than usual. Since then, however, it has suffered what can only be described as 'dieback'. The flowering bravado continued through the summer though, alongside dying branches, as shown in the photo. At the time of writing it has lost about 75% of its old growth, with only this year's regrowth from near the main stem base looking remotely healthy. Another smaller specimen in a more shady position has survived unscathed, though being younger, the progeny of the 'big one', it has not yet flowered.

Plant name	Ground (G) or pot (P)	Comments
Acacia pravissima	P (tub)	Some dieback to tips and an almost complete loss of flower stalks, but has recovered well with prodigious flower stalk growth already by September.
Brachyglottis greyii **'Sunshine'**	G	Survived. Flowered as usual.
Callistemon linearis	G/P	Both survived undamaged and flowered as usual.
Correa backhousiana x C. alba	P	Survived undamaged and continued to flower. New flowers out as usual in October.
Corokia cotoneaster	G	Survived, though totally defoliated during the winter.
Corokia buddlejoides	G	Survived, though totally defoliated during the winter.
Grevillea rosmarinifolia	G	Unscathed and continued flowering throughout the winter as usual.
Griselinia littoralis	G	No problems.
Hebe (Veronica) **'Great Orme'**	G	Some tip damage and continued dieback in their centres through spring into summer, but survived and flowered quite well. They still are!
Hebe (Veronica) salicifolia	G	Cannot hold these down! No problems. Flowered as usual.
Leptospermum grandiflorum	G	No problems, though no flowers this year.
Leptospermum lanigerum	G	Some tip frost damage, but has grown well this summer; fewer flowers than usual.
Libertia peregrinans **'Gold Leaf'**	G	Survived. No problems, though it has never flowered.
Libertia chilense	G	A surprising survival, though with more leaf damage than previously. Raised from a Welsh seed! Flowered less well than usual.
Melaleuca squamea	P	Spent winter in full winter sun, but lives in shade at rear of bungalow. No damage. Flowered for the first time (new seed) in April/May this year.
Melalueca squarrosa	G	Numerous browned/blackened leaves near ends of branches but survived. Grown from seed 2018. Too young to flower?
Olearia macrodonta	G	No problems. Some flowers through summer.
Ozothamnus ledifolius	G	No problems. Flowered as usual in spring.
Phormium tenax	G	Large specimens (to 1.5 m tall and across) survived and flowered well. Most large specimens locally appear to have been killed though. Leaves on a smaller (dwarf?) specimen killed by cold, but much new growth through summer.
Podocarpus nivalis	G	Totally laughed off the winter! Too young to flower though.
Sophora microphylla	G	Grown from seed ca. 2015, now 2.5 m tall against east-facing wall. NB, not a garden variety. Tips of branches frosted back as in previous winters, but plant has grown considerably this season.

Table 2. Australasian survivors following winter 2022/23 not mentioned in text

I grow two other species of *Callistemon*: *citrinus* and *linearis* (crimson bottlebrush and narrow-leaved bottlebrush respectively). Most of the latter are in the ground and have come through the winter unharmed, flowering as usual. Arguably, I have too many of these as they seed so profusely and germinate like there is no tomorrow; many other gardens in the village now have specimens! Most *C. citrinus* were killed outright. The few survivors have been slow to recover; a highly marginal species for this part of the world. One or two large specimens have quite significant regrowth from near their base though. One in a large pot spent the winter in the shed/greenhouse, survived and has been really happy through the summer outside.

Other Australians in pots are transferred to the shed/greenhouse for the winter. Although minimum temperatures here are about the same as outside, the little extra protection has in the past sufficed to get them through. This year, though, the *Dicksonia antarctica* suffered quite badly, with many browned fronds and only five new fronds emerging subsequently. Its trunk is still only about 20cm tall and it was protected with some fleece plus some dead native fern leaves in the crown. Sharing the shed area were a number of *Anigozanthus* of unknown species and a 1.7m tall *Paraserianthes lophantha* ((synonym *Albizia lophantha*, Cape Leeuwin wattle). The crown of the latter was against the shed roof and was killed, but it has since grown bushier in its sunny outside position. All the kangaroo paw leaves were blackened and killed, but regrowth has been good, with one flowering as usual this summer.

I am aware I am biased towards Australian plants, but frankly my New Zealanders largely survived the winter without too much effort. These, together with lucky Australians, are listed in Table 2. Of the remainder, the leaves of a *Hoheria sexstylosa* 'Stardust' (ribbonwood) were badly mottled and killed by the cold, but regrowth soon occurred, although there have been no flowers this year. My *Cordyline australis* suffered as many inland growing plants of this species did after last winter. I was driven insane with 'Cordyline envy', seeing and smelling so many in full flower on a visit to Hastings in early June! None of mine appears to have died however. One survived without any damage to its central growth point, though has been sluggish this year since. The other four, one branching and more than a metre tall, progressively deteriorated and died back during the spring and early summer, but all five have produced significant new growth from the roots or the base of the main stem. Fingers crossed that this new growth does not suffer through the coming winter.

I finish this piece with a reference to *Acacia pravissima* (Ovens wattle). The photo shows a branch tip during the January hoar frost. It was after this that most of the flower stalks were shed. This year even more flower stalks have been produced; food for thought…!



Graham Sumner

Acacia pravissima

A winter survivor in Suffolk - *Eucalyptus gunnii*

Jennifer Ruttley

I have *Eucalyptus gunnii* growing to the right hand side of my patio area looking down the garden towards the east. It has been in situ for nearly 4 years, regularly cut back to keep it manageable. There had been some very cold weather earlier in the winter, but on the 22nd January, 2023, we had a hoar frost and the foliage was completely white for much of the morning. It had already lost some leaves but over the following few weeks the leaves on the part of the shrub away from the house began to fall and by spring over half the plant was completely dead looking. The half of the shrub by the house remained fully clothed in foliage.

I had intended cutting back the dead looking trunks to just above ground level but I didn't get round to it. Then, well into April, I noticed small leaves appearing on the very tips of some of the outer twigs. Over the following weeks, all the twigs gradually gained foliage again and now (early August) it's a mass of leaves and new growth and in need of tidying up. It's had no special care or anything else, but like many Aussie plants, it just had the will to survive.



Jennifer Ruttley

Winter 2022–23 in East Kent

Jeremy Spon

I feel somewhat guilty writing about last winter, given the damage other members sustained in their gardens as here, in East Kent, it was something of a non-event. Although there was a cold snap in December 2022, in my garden almost no damage was done – a striking contrast to places just a few miles further west.

Previous hard winters have seen the cold weather coming from the east – the 'Beast from the East' in 2018 being a prime example. That winter, we had a sheet of ice down the front of our house, which faces east, a minimum temperature on one night of -10.2°C, and *Eucalyptus dalrympleana* was more or less completely defoliated (although it did recover).

This time, unusually, the cold was more intense as you went west; in Canterbury the lowest temperature recorded by our weather station was -2.4°C (it is in quite a sheltered position, and temperatures may have been a little lower in the open garden.) There were only two days when the temperature failed to rise to or above 0°C during the day. I did lose an old plant of *Melaleuca diosmifolia*, kept in a pot in an unheated greenhouse, but I am not sure this was entirely due to cold, or whether it might have succumbed to disease. Otherwise, there was little to report; the eucalyptus (7 species currently planted out) all kept growing, so I was really shocked, during our visit for the AGM in February, to see just how devastating the damage was to our President, Tom Hart Dyke's collection of eucalyptus at Lullingstone. No doubt there will be more severe winters here in the future, but this time I think we dodged a bullet!

BACK TO THE FUTURE?

Jeff Layman

Perhaps it's best to start by explaining the somewhat strange title. Now and again I browse through the plants and gardening sections of second-hand bookshops. Several years ago I bought a two volume set of "Cassell's Dictionary of Practical Gardening", published in 1913. This appears to have been put together from a series of articles published in perhaps 1905 - 1908, later consolidated, amended, and updated. There are mentions in the text to references from those years, such as publications from Kew. The book covers about 6000 genera, the majority of which I had never heard of. The entries are mainly in alphabetical order of genus, but there are general entries on gardening. This resembles the "RHS Dictionary of Gardening" published in 1992. They are also, unsurprisingly, rather top-heavy on those Victorian favourites - ferns and orchids

Strangely, the entries do not mention the family to which the genus belongs, but only to the order. I found this somewhat confusing, as the order name was often identical to the family name with which I am familiar. For example, the entry for the genus *Anigozanthos* states that it is "Ord. Haemodoraceae". If you look up *Anigozanthos* in Wikipedia, it states "Order: Commelinales" and "Family: Haemodoraceae". Perhaps someone reading this knows how taxonomy was used in the Edwardian era, but it is an area with which I am completely unfamiliar.

That brings us nicely to another matter. Benjamin Franklin noted - and I paraphrase this - that there is nothing certain in life except death and taxes. I have to disagree; to that I would add "taxonomic changes". One thing I was particularly aware of throughout the book was the large number of times it used "synonym xxxx, yyyy, or zzzz" for an entry. In addition, there were numerous footnotes on each page which referred to an entry which would normally have been on that page in alphabetical order, but only appears as a footnote and "see xxxx", as the name of the genus had been changed, or was uncertain. As if that wasn't confusing enough, genus entries might be annotated with extra genus names from different sources, quoting both the name and source!

Even allowing for all the naming issues, it still intrigued me as to how many genera were completely unfamiliar. From the descriptions, many seemed particularly interesting. So what happened to those genera? And, as to the point of this article, were there any plants mentioned which had been forgotten, and might again be considered for growing today? A lot has changed in the last 100 years or so, and as we are often driven to grow new introductions, could we gainfully consider looking back and again growing plants that have been forgotten?

So I browsed through the volumes, trying to decide what to include, and what to omit. If I had heard of a genus, I ignored it (or later ignored it if it was found to be the same as a renamed plant with which I was familiar). I did not include orchids, ferns, or palms, nor those specialised plants which are almost impossible to grow - mangroves. Some genera I decided to omit if they were from large families (such as those in Asteraceae), or some mainly tropical genera from, for example, Acanthaceae. This was completely

arbitrary, and occasionally I included one or two in error. I tried to concentrate on plants from Australia and New Zealand, but the entries usually failed to mention a country. Some interesting genera might be missing through my error of not believing that the family was present in Australasia. This was most certainly the case with gesneriads, which I hadn't thought were found in Australasia until I was halfway through the second volume and one was mentioned as coming from Australia! And when I got to nearly the end of the addendum, I came across *Rhabdothamnus*, which is the only gesneriad in New Zealand. I now know that there are six Australian genera in the Gesneriaceae. The entries, as befit something with "Practical" in its title, stated whether the plants were hardy, half-hardy, greenhouse, intermediate house, or stove plants. At the start I omitted stove plants, but later came to realise that cultivation practises in 1913 were considerably more conservative regarding temperature than they are today.

The first "short list" came to about 550 genera. From a lot of internet searching, those were then narrowed down to genera which were found in Australasia, and there were about 160 of those. That was still somewhat too many, so I decided to limit it to only those genera endemic to Australasia.

In conclusion, here are a few genera from the past to consider for growing today. I hope your researches on the internet are rewarding and give you food for thought for other possible trials, and that you are looking forward to going "Back to the Future". Of course, with the problem of seed supply today usually requiring a phytosanitary certificate, or, for example, listing in CITES and other places restricting availability, actually obtaining these plants or their seeds might be difficult, if not impossible.

Acrophyllum
Acrotriche
Alseuosmia
Ammobium
Andersonia
Angianthus
Angophora
Anopterus
Aotus
Aphanopetalum
Babingtonia
Barklya
Bauera
Bedfordia
Bertya
Callicoma
Callistachys
Cheiranthera
Chloanthes
Comesperma
Conostephium
Cosmelia
Davidsonia
Diplopeltis
Dracophyllum
Duboisia
Elaeocarpus
Entelea
Eupomatia
Fieldia
Goodia
Gymnostachys
Howittea
Labichea
Lasiopetalum
Leptomeria
Lissanthe
Logania
Lysinema
Marianthus
Medicosma
Melichrus
Microcachrys
Micromyrtus
Mirbelia
Monotocha
Opercularia
Pachynema
Pennantia
Phebalium
Phyllota
Plagianthus
Platytheca
Pomax
Poranthera
Pronaya
Rhabdothamnus
Rhipoganum
Sphaerolobium
Sprengelia
Spyridium
Tomasia
Tremandra
Tristania
Trymalium
Zieria

GETTING BACK TO THE FUTURE

Judy Clark

It has been much more difficult to source Australasian seeds and plants in the UK since Brexit, but thanks to the APS Seedlist some of the genera on Jeff Layman's list are obtainable. Why not try the following species?

Ammobium alatum

The winged everlasting is an attractive short-lived perennial (best treated as an annual in colder areas) whose white daisy-type flowers have yellow centres. Seed is easy to germinate provided it is fresh; it's a member of the Asteraceae and like many daisy family plants its seeds lose viability after a year or so. I now save seed every year but in the past I have purchased seed from Chiltern Seeds which germinated well. I also grow *Nablonium calyceroides* which used to be called *Ammobium calyceroides*. I got my plant from APS member Beth Smith and I've never found seed for sale.

Barklya syringifolia

Known as the crown of gold or golden shower tree (among other names), *Barklya syringifolia* is a member of the pea family (Fabaceae). Elliot and Jones (Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants suitable for cultivation, volume 2, 1982) describe it as "One of the most spectacular subtropical native species." and photos show stunning golden-yellow flowers. I have never grown it but if I had a conservatory I would be tempted to try.

Callicoma serratifolia

The common name of this small tree is black wattle. Its pale yellow flowers superficially resemble those of Acacia but it is actually a member of the family Cunoniaceae and related to *Eucryphia* and *Weinmannia* though *Callicoma* seems unlikely to be hardy in the UK. I ordered it for the seedlist because I liked the look of it but I've never got round to trying it. For more information go to **www.anbg.gov.au/gnp/gnp14/callicoma-serratifolia.html**.

Callistachys lanceolata

Known as the native willow, for its leaves rather than its bright yellow pea-type flowers, this is another member of the Fabaceae. I grew a specimen from seed several years ago and it's now out in the garden. I thought I would be anxious about it in winter as it's from south west Western Australia but as I write (November 2023) I am more worried that it might drown!

Elaeocarpus reticulata

This small tree from eastern Australian is known as the blueberry ash, presumably because of its purple fruits, and also as fairy petticoats because of its cup-shaped white flowers with fringed petals. I sowed some seed at the end of 2020. It is said that germination can take up to two years but nothing has appeared so far. However I am an optimist so I won't throw the pot away just yet. It seems unlikely to be hardy in the UK but could make a good container specimen. For more information see **www.anbg.gov.au/gnp/interns-2002/elaeocarpus-reticulatus.html**.

Entelea arborescens

From New Zealand, where it is known as whau, this large shrub/small tree is the only species in the genus Entelea, which belongs to the mallow family (Malvaceae). I have not grown it but photos show an attractive plant with shiny toothed green leaves and white flowers with

yellow centres. It seems likely to be hardy in mild areas of the UK. Mallow family species tend to be easy to germinate without any pre-treatment.

Goodia lotifolia

This shrub is found in many places in south eastern Australia, including Tasmania. My plant is about 10 years old and its yellow pea type flowers appear throughout spring and summer, often in great profusion, and sporadically at other times. (As I write there are a few blooms.) The seed needs to be soaked or scarified but then germinates easily. I am very fond of it but so are snails, so young plants need to be protected until they get past the juvenile stage. It is perfectly hardy in my garden and I would expect it to prove so in other mild areas of the UK.

Plagianthus divaricatus and *Plagianthus regius*

These two species are the sole New Zealand members of the genus *Plagianthus*. I've not grown either but Gary Dunlop and Jeremy Spon have, and have written about them in Pentachondra (see issue 57, December 2016, page 32 and issue 58, May 2017, page 23 respectively). *Plagianthus* belongs to the mallow family (Malvaceae), seeds of which in my experience tend to be quite easy to germinate. According to Trees and Shrubs Online (**www.treesandshrubsonline.org/articles/plagianthus/**)the shrubby *P. divaricatus* has survived -15°C in the Loire Valley in France, but the deciduous tree *P. regius* is unlikely to survive -10°C.

Sprengelia sprengelioides

This beautiful heathland plant, endemic to coastal areas of eastern Australia, is a member of the Ericaceae family. I've never grown it but apparently its seeds need cold moist stratification (keep the pot in the fridge after sowing) to germinate and even then germination is erratic.

Tristianopsis laurina

Until relatively recently this rainforest tree, known as kanooka or water gum, was named *Tristania laurina*. It has pretty creamy yellow-orange flowers and was in bloom when I was in Melbourne earlier this year. In the wild it can get quite tall but it grows slowly in cooler areas. The genus *Tristaniopsis* is in the Myrtaceae so seed should germinate easily. Plants are offered by Burncoose Nurseries in Cornwall; they describe the species as tender.

HOHERIA SEXSTYLOSA

Jeff Layman

Many of us strive to grow the most exotic plants from Australia and New Zealand, most of which are often on the borderline of hardiness. Sometimes, however, we can miss fairly common plants which are easy to grow, are relatively hardy, and can give a spectacular display of flowers.

One such plant is *Hoheria sexstylosa* 'Stardust'. Note first that the veracity of many hoheria labels can be doubtful as they hybridise widely. Whether or not this matters is open to opinion, as they all appear to flower readily.

Anyway, I planted a specimen labelled *Hoheria sexstylosa* 'Stardust' about seven years ago, on a corner of our drive. It was about 120cm high and 50cm across. When we had the drive redone with tarmac the drainage in that corner disappeared, so that after rain the hoheria was always in standing water. This, however, never seemed to bother it in the slightest. It grew 80cm



Jeff Layman

Hoheria sexstylosa

or more every year, keeping a fairly tight form, and had a few flowers on it every summer.

It wasn't bothered by cold until last winter (2022-23), when some of its uppermost branches died off. The rest of the tree, by now about 5m high, was untouched by the cold. The extreme cold and extended winter rest seemed to kick it into a remarkable flowering state. By mid-July it was smothered in its slightly-scented, attractive white flowers. But it wasn't just us who found it attractive - it was a magnet for flying insects of all types. One afternoon there were a dozen Red Admirals on it, and so many bees - honey and solitary - I couldn't count them all. The tree had far more butterflies on it than my *Buddleja davidii* 'Rêve de papillon'!

This tree is widely available from garden centres and in my opinion is well worth trying. It's evergreen, appears to require no maintenance at all, and doesn't seem to be bothered by pests and diseases.

A CHELSEA GARDEN IN AUSTRALIA

Nicky Zanen

Many award winning gardens at the Chelsea Flower Show get transplanted into public parks. When Australian garden designer Phillip Johnson won both a gold medal and the Best Show Garden award in 2013 for his Australian Garden, the idea of recreating the garden in the UK was totally impractical. Instead he dreamt about bringing the garden closer to his home, and this dream has come true!

The Chelsea Australian Garden at Olinda is located within the Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden on Wurundjeri Country, not far from Melbourne. Established on a section of the old Olinda golf course, it is twenty times larger than the winning show garden. The red volcanic soil in the Dandenong Ranges allows an incredibly diverse range of plants to grow. Four microclimates have been created: full sun north facing; part shaded through to full shaded; and a wet/water area. This is key to attracting wildlife, and on my last visit there I heard a pobblebonk (a frog) calling.

Most of the construction was done during a challenging wet winter of 2022, with huge rocks and cranes used on muddy slopes, making for an interesting adventure in muck and mess. Over 10,000 plants have been included in its 6,000 m2, including several grafted species of *Hakea* and



Nicky Zanen

The Chelsea Australian Garden at Olinda

Grevillea. Extensive nursery preparation went into ensuring that many could be planted out as mature specimens including tree ferns, grass trees and Wollemi Pines.

One splendid feature is the now iconic Waratah sculpture; inspired by Phil's parents it was created to represent how it would feel looking from the inside out of a waratah bloom, and with a viewing portal the exact height of her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. She remained interested in the progress of this new garden and Phil kept her informed right up until her death in 2022.

The first section to be built was the rocky outcrop which provides echoes of the origins of the Dandenong Ranges and gives a special microclimate where plants can grow naturally in its nooks and crannies. The waterfalls cascading into the billabong below provide the beating heart of the garden. It is an organic system powered by solar panels and fed by storm water gathered from the surrounding area and the levels vary naturally according to local conditions. This is a garden that reveals itself slowly, various views are framed as you walk around. There are lots of lovely rest stops with informative decorative signs which encourage spending time just looking and listening, watching quietly to see what comes and goes. It cannot be underestimated how much we need the beauty of nature, natural places in our lives for our mental health and well-being. This garden supports that deeply.

More information can be found at **www.chelseaaustraliangardenatolinda.com.au/**.This garden is well worth a visit, especially if you don't have much time in Melbourne. Or you could attend the 32nd Australian Native Plants Society (Australia) (ANPSA) Conference to be held in Melbourne from 30th September to 4th October 2024. It will be hosted i by the Australian Plants Society Victoria and a visit to the Chelsea Australian Garden is included, along with visits to many other gardens. You can find out more about the Conference at **apsvic.org.au/anpsa-biennial-conference-2024/**.

DUNDEE BOTANIC GARDEN

Judy Clark

I have wanted to visit Dundee Botanic Garden since Claire Reaney wrote about it in Pentachondra several years ago[1,2]. So when my sister came over from Australia last summer and proposed a trip to Macduff (to see the home of our Scots ancestors who in 1883 emigrated to the very south of the South Island of New Zealand) I suggested that our itinerary should take in Dundee.

Located on land looking out over the banks of the River Tay, Dundee Botanic Garden is part of the University of Dundee and supports its courses in plant science, including molecular biology, plant physiology and ecology. Its 9.5 hectares pack in a lot, including a garden of evolution, an area demonstrating native plant communities and exotic collections of plants from places with similar ecological and physical characteristics.

I don't know how frequent warm sunny days on Scotland's east coast are but June 8th was glorious. W. We intended to make straight for the Australia and New Zealand Area but got sidetracked. First by the Garden of Evolution, which has plants set out in the order in which they evolved, a really interesting way of arranging them and one I had not come across before. The area includes a genetics garden wherein is grown maize with variably coloured kernels, the plants studied by one of my scientific heroes, Barbara McClintock. Her ideas about 'jumping genes' or transposons - elements of an organism's genome that can move about - were rubbished at first but eventually her work was recognised and in 1983 she won the Nobel Prize.



Judy Clark

Celmisia semicordata

I couldn't pass up the chance to see wildflowers I don't usually come across, so it was not until after a second detour that we reached the Australia and New Zealand Area. At first glance I was a bit disappointed as it looked unkempt and in need of a bit of TLC. However there are still plenty of interesting plants; those in flower included *Celmisia semicordata*, *Veronica perfoliata*, *Corokia cotoneaster*, *Grevillea juniperina*, *Olearia myrsinoides* and several hebes (*Veronica* species). Trees had clearly suffered storm damage but two Tasmanian endemics, *Eucalyptus tenuiramis* (silver peppermint) and



Judy Clark

Hebe pinguifolia?



Judy Clark

Hebe macrantha

Asterotrichion discolor (Tasmanian currajong) were doing well.

A couple of young gardeners were busy weeding so I approached one for a chat. I discovered from her that Claire Reaney had left for another job in October 2021, and, sadly, that she had died not long after. She turned out to be the new botanical horticultural team leader, Sarah Carlton, in charge of revamping the Australia and New Zealand Area to improve conditions for some of the plants and make the whole area easier to look after.

After an excellent lunch in the cafe we paid a quick visit to the temperate greenhouse whose renovation Claire wrote about in Pentachondra. This area was looking very striking, as was the tropical greenhouse but unfortunately we couldn't stay as long as I would have liked as we had to get to Macduff by early evening.

So I didn't look for a special fern in the ponds, though I might have had I read the online information more carefully. *Regnellidium diphyllum* from Brazil, reputedly very difficult to cultivate, grows not only in both glasshouses but also in a pond outside. It belongs to the family Marsileaceae, the same family as the Australian aquatic fern *Marsilea drummondii*[3], known as common nardoo. I have wondered whether this species would grow outside in mild areas in the UK, given that it is said to withstand Canberra frosts[4].

So, something to return for. All in all Dundee Botanic Garden is well worth a visit, and I will certainly go again if I get the chance.

Notes and References

1. Claire Reaney, May 2018, Australian Annuals at Dundee Botanic Garden, Pentachondra 60 p 27

2. Claire Reaney, May 2021, Gondwana Plants at Dundee Botanic Garden, Pentachondra No 66 p 7

3. Australian National Botanic Garden, 2004, *Marsilea drummondii*, **www.anbg.gov.au/gnp/interns-2004/marsilea-drummondii.html**, accessed November 2023

4. Assuming the online information is up to date. See **www.dundee.ac.uk/botanic/plant-collections** (accessed November 2023).

Thanks to Steve Harding for identifying some unlabelled hebes that I photographed.

Veronica perfoliata



Judy Clark

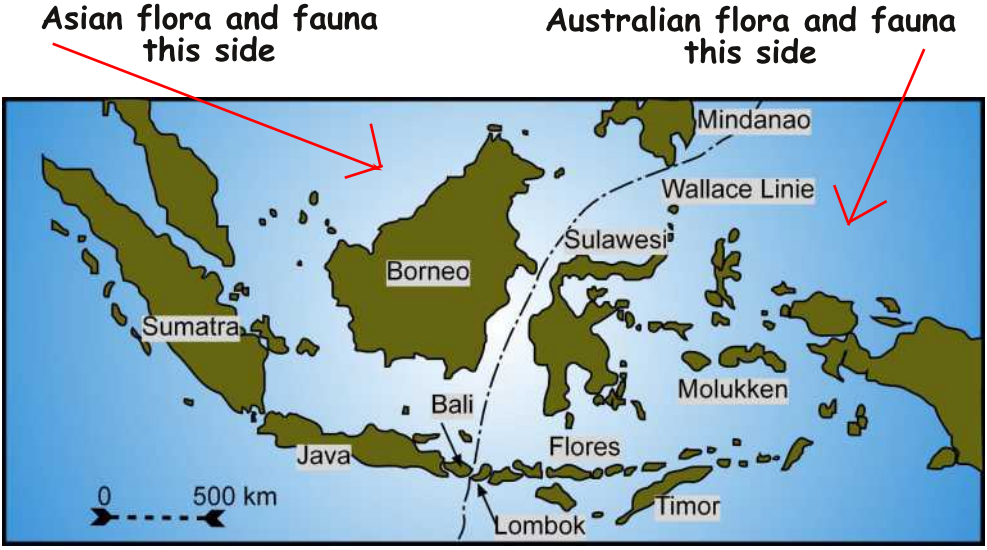
AUSTRALIAN NATIVE CITRUS

Mike Saalfeld

Visitors to the Mediterranean countries often assume that the ubiquitous orange and lemon trees are native to the region, but in fact citrus varieties originated in southern China and north-eastern India. Knowledgeable botanists say that they gradually spread through much of tropical Asia and have since been distributed by humans to climatically suitable regions world-wide.

The imaginary 'Wallace Line' generally separates the native flora and fauna of Asia from that of Australia. Very few species have naturally spread across this division which marks the convergence of geological tectonic plates. So it is surprising to find that there are six distinct endemic citrus species in Australia, plus another three in nearby Papua New Guinea. Scientists generally seem convinced these species must have originated in Asia but struggle to explain their natural dispersal across the Wallace Line into Australia.

Until recently this group of citrus species was virtually unknown outside Australia. There were only a handful of introductions into European botanic gardens. However, in the past few decades, some varieties have moved from the preserve of Australian bush-tucker enthusiasts to the gourmet dishes of top chefs. Some small-scale commercial cultivation has started in Australia, as well as trials in Europe and USA. Furthermore, there is hope that they may contain genes which confer resistance to certain diseases which are currently adversely affecting citrus production in many parts of the world.



The Wallace Line

Gunnar Reis Wikimedia Commons



All photos Mike Saalfield

Citrus gracilis

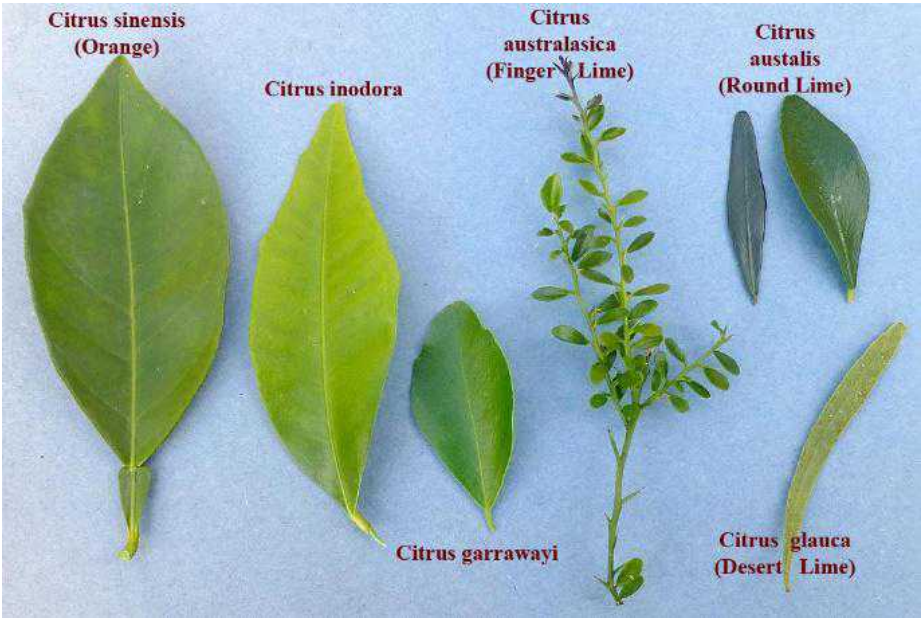
I have been growing Australian citrus in my Buckinghamshire garden for many years. I have also made a couple of trips to Australia to photograph these plants in their native habitats and I maintain a website with information about them.

Australian citrus species

The six Australian citrus species (*Citrus australasica*, *C. australis*, *C. inodora*, *C. garrawayi*, *C. glauca*, *C. gracilis*) have in the past been mainly classified as Microcitrus but are now taxonomically re-united with other Citrus. *C. australasica* (finger lime), and *C. australis* (round lime, are reasonably common in the Brisbane area and the border lands between New South Wales and Queensland. *C. glauca* (desert lime), can be found intermittently throughout the drier areas of eastern Australia. *C. inodora* and *C. garrawayi* occur in limited areas of the wet tropics of northern Queensland.



Citrus gracilis, sometimes known as the Kakadu lime, is rare and threatened and only found in a few locations in the north of the Northern Territory. It was only formally described at the end of the 20th century. Finding and photographing this plant and its knobbly fruit was the highlight of my travels in Australia but, sadly, viable seeds were not present.



Here are a few notes and photographs of some of my plants taken this summer here in Denham, South Buckinghamshire. None of the species are reliably cold-hardy in our damp winters, so all are pot-grown and brought into a heated greenhouse between October and March. Most species appear to hybridise readily when grown together with their Australian brethren or with other citrus varieties. Growing from seed – if you can obtain it – is easy, but plants take many years to flower and fruit.

In the wild, Australian citrus vary greatly in size. The smallest is *C. inodora*, a sub-shrub up to a couple of metres tall, whereas round lime trees can reach heights of 40m. Finger lime trees are under-storey inhabitants of sub-tropical rainforest and are generally about 6 metres tall. Here in England, pot size generally limits plant size but round limes often shoot up to several metres and need chopping back.

The photo above shows leaves picked from my potted plants with a 10cm long leaf from an orange tree for comparison. You can see why the Finger lime in particular used to be classed as Microcitrus.

Finger lime, *Citrus australasica* (see opposite) is very thorny with tiny elliptical leaves which become a bit larger on mature plants, and is very variable from seed. It produces finger-shaped fruit up to about 12cm long and 2cm diameter. Fruit can be green, yellow, pink, red, purple or black! Flesh can be yellow, green, pink or red, consisting of tiny round vesicles which burst in the mouth, sometimes called citrus caviar. It is sour, but good in cold drinks or as accompaniment to fish, and nice sprinkled on ice cream. Increasingly popular, it is used by top chefs. Note that plants now sometimes imported from Italian nurseries are usually hybrids, producing fatter, more egg-shaped fruit.



Citrus inodora (above and right) forms more thumb-shaped fruit but green turning yellow when ripe. Its flesh is much less acidic than the finger lime but not very flavoursome. This species is unique among citrus for having twin thorns.



Citrus autralasiaca (below and below right)





Round lime, *Citrus australis* produces green golf-ball sized fruit with an acidic, green-yellow crunchy interior. Young plants have thin linear leaves; older ones have diamond-shaped or oval leaves.

Desert lime, *Citrus glauca*, has narrow, grey-green, bi-facial leaves and green fruit up to small cherry size. It fruits rarely for me, but one vigorous hybrid is more prolific. New growth often cascades downwards.



Citrus australis

Growing Australian citrus

Of all the Australian native citrus species, only the finger lime and the desert lime are known to survive some degrees of frost. However, I planted one sturdy finger lime tree unprotected in my garden and it progressively declined over three years before finally succumbing. Although I have never risked it, I am sure the desert lime would also die - its frost hardiness requires low humidity in still air, not several months of the damp wind-chill we get here. That said, no doubt there are some very favoured micro-climates in the UK where these species would do better.

Pot cultivation of any citrus, Australian or not, can be a challenge.

Incorrect watering is the number one cause of citrus problems. The growing medium must be really free draining and plants should never stand in water. A permanently damp compost will result in root rot (phytophthora) which causes leaf drop, dieback and a slow death.

Indoors the plants resent central heating combined with low winter light levels. Cool greenhouse or conservatory conditions are much better. I aim for a minimum of 5°C. In summer, putting the pots outside is the best treatment and will dramatically reduce pest problems. Indoors, scale insects and spider mites often proliferate.

Regular feeding is essential; citrus require plenty of nitrogen. Although specialist feeds are available, I use a weak balanced soluble feed at every watering year round. Summer rains outside wash out any residual excess salts from this regime.



Citrus glauca

Now here are a few more photos of my Australian citrus varieties. Perhaps they will whet your appetite for growing these plants! For further information please look at my non-commercial website **www.homecitrusgrowers.co.uk** or contact me directly at **mike.saalfeld@gmail.com**. I am on the RHS speaker list and happy to give talks about Australian citrus and growing citrus in the UK.



Citrus seedlings



Black finger limes



Red centre lime

NOT *ACACIA BOORMANII*

Judy Clark

A couple of years ago I went to Hill House Nursery in Devon with my son to help him choose some plants for his garden. While I was there I spotted a wattle labelled *Acacia boormanii*, a species I didn't have in my garden. So I bought it, for who knew when I might get another opportunity.

When I got home I planted it out almost immediately as, unusually for me, I knew where I wanted to put it. My Snowy River wattle, to give it its common name, thrived. By April 2023 buds had appeared and by early August flowers had begun to appear. They were (and still are) a lovely bright yellow in colour, and soon there were lots of them. Flowers continued to emerge until October, when colder weather seemed to halt further development.

What a great plant: a smallish wattle (I read it could reach to 4.5m) that flowers well and doesn't seem to be very fussy. One that hails from the southern tablelands of New South Wales and north-eastern Victoria, making it likely to be relatively cold hardy over here. And, what's more, it flowered on Wattle Day (September 1st); all the other wattles in my garden flower from late winter to midsummer. This was a wattle I felt I could recommend, and I decided to write something for Pentachondra.

I had no reason to believe that my plant was anything other than *Acacia boormanii*, but I thought it would be prudent to check that it was labelled correctly. So I looked a bit more carefully at its phyllodes (the technical name for what look like leaves) and flowers, and found some discrepancies with the description in World Wide Wattle[1]. My plant has longer and wider phyllodes (though the width would fit with an atypical variant), and too many flowers in its globular flower clusters.

But what really puzzled me was the flowering time. World Wide Wattle doesn't provide a flowering time, but all the other references that I found that did, both online and offline, said that the Snowy River wattle flowers in the spring. Now my (admittedly limited) experience of growing acacias here in the UK is that they seem to know which way is up; if a wattle flowers in spring in Australia it will flower sometime during March, April and May in the UK, give or take the odd week. But what I didn't know, and the literature didn't tell me, is whether wattles, and especially this species, ever bloom outside their usual flowering period.

I consulted my friend Bill Aitcheson who runs the ANPSA Acacia Study Group. Bill told me that in Australia *Acacia boormanii* flowers in late winter/early spring, and its flowering time is very consistent every year. He wouldn't expect this species to behave differently in the UK. I also sent him some photos and a description and in his view my plant isn't *Acacia boormanii*.

So what is it? Bill suggested it might be *Acacia retinodes* (wirilda) or one of two closely related species, *A. provincialis* or *A. uncifolia*. Very helpfully, he pointed me to a review of these three species which contains detailed descriptions[2]. This confirmed for me that the *A. retinodes* specimen growing in my garden is that species, and that my supposed *A. boormanii* is not *A. retinodes*, and fits best with the description of *A. provincialis*. It would be nice to be definite but I feel

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I should reserve judgement until I see when it flowers next year.

I would be really interested to hear from any member who grows or has grown *Acacia boormanii*, and even more pleased to receive photos and/or phyllodes or flowers. In the meantime I shall order it from the APS seed list, and see what transpires.

1. World Wide Wattle, *Acacia boormannii*, **worldwidewattle.com/speciesgallery/boormanii.php**, (accessed November 2023)

2. O'Leary, MC. 2007. Review of *Acacia retinodes* and closely related species, *A. uncifolia* and *A. provincialis* (Leguminosae: Mimosoideae: sect. Phyllodineae). Journal of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens 21: 95-109 **https://data.environment.sa.gov.au/Content/Publications/JABG21P095_OLeary.pdf** (accessed November 2023)

FROM A NEW MEMBER

Haidi Jenkin

Thanks for welcoming me as a new member of the Australasian Plant Society. I am an Aussie living in London with a particular interest in trees and bonsai (I run the website **www.bonsai-science.com**).

Unfortunately, my interest in trees only developed after I moved to the UK nearly 20 years ago, so I didn't appreciate the amazing biodiversity around me when I was living in Australia. But thanks to the recent seed purchase opportunity from the society I have a range of Australian trees waiting to germinate which may eventually become bonsai . I am particularly looking forward to adding *Diselma archeri* and the Bunya Bunya pine (*Araucaria bidwillii*) to my collection, if the germination gods are

on my side. I also obtained Melaleuca, Banksia and Acacia seeds, which are native species used by the Australian bonsai community. If any society members are looking to rehome their Australasian trees for whatever reason I would happy to take them in as pre-grown material is an excellent source for bonsai. If you have a spare tree please contact me at **info@bonsai-science.com**.

I thought members might be interested in the trees I encountered on a recent trip back to Western Australia. I visited my Mum who has lived on a bush block in Banjup, south of Perth, for 25 years, and I took a trip to Wongan Hills in the Western Australian wheatbelt, where my Dad grew up. Some of the plants I encountered are unique to the region, including wheatbelt eucalypts, Western Australian peppermint (*Agonis flexuosa* - right) and in my Mum's back yard a beautiful salmon gum (*Eucalyptus salmonophloia* - below).



Haidi Jenkin

Bark of *Eucalyptus salmonophloia*



Haidi Jenkin

MACROZAMIA RIEDLEI: AN AMAZING SURVIVOR

Jeff layman

Macrozamia riedlei, commonly known as zamia or zamia palm, is one of 41 currently recognised species in the genus, all found only in Australia. Most live in Queensland and New South Wales, but the zamia palm is native to south west Australia. Macrozamias are members of the family Zamiaceae, which in turn belongs in the order Cycadales, better known as cycads. Like conifers, cycads are gymnosperms, meaning their seeds are not enclosed in an ovary.

I started *Macrozamia riedlei* from seed in 1990, give or take a year or two. It grew quite well, producing a new leaf every year for around the first 10 years or so, and losing a leaf about once every 3 - 5 years. After that, it sometimes missed a year in producing a new leaf. About ten years ago it started losing more leaves than growing new ones, and five years ago it stopped growing new leaves completely. Its last leaf was more brown than green, and 6 months ago I cut it off, leaving only a "stump", intending to get rid of the plant.

I never got round to dumping it, and so it remained in its pot the conservatory. Here I should add that I had been growing several bulbs of the South African species *Haemanthus albiflos* in a pot next to the macrozamia for several years. That regularly produces seed, and as there was space in the macrozamia pot, I sowed some of the seed in it. Those soon germinated and grew into flowering-sized bulbs.

In June I decided to have a look at roots of the macrozamia to see if they were still alive. They seemed to be, so I replaced it in its pot and gave it a good watering. In late August I happened to glance at the plant and saw a 12 cm long leaf growing out of the stump!!!

My *Macrozamia riedlei* plant now (in November) has three leaves. It remains in the pot with the *Haemanthus albiflos*. I am now calling it "The No.11 bus plant", as you wait years for one leaf to appear and then three leaves come along together!



Jeff Layman

BITS AND PIECES

compiled by Judy Clark

RHS plant name changes

The Plant Names Bulletin in the March 2023 issue of The Plant Review reports that *Pratia* has been transferred to *Lobelia* (at last!). So *Pratia angulata* becomes *Lobelia angulata* and *Pratia pedunculata* becaomes *Lobelia pedunculata*. These changes appear in the RHS Plant Finder and RHS online databases.

Jeff Irons knew about '*Grevillea barklyana*'

Jeff Layman responded to the article titled *Grevillea* 'Barkly's Daughter' that appeared in the May 2023 edition. He wrote:

"I've been reading through Pentachondra and in particular the articles about *Grevillea barklyana* (or not!). I grew this in Horsham for several years, and also had some correspondence with Jeff Irons and Tim Darrington about it being a hybrid rather than the species. This is what Jeff had to say in April 2009: "Some years ago The Old Walled Garden imported plants of *G. barklayana*. Since most of the plants sold in Australia as *G. barklyana* (no second a) are hybrids I bought one. It too was a hybrid. Graham Hutchins bought one and has been selling propagules as the species. The true species is lobed only in the juvenile stage. The illustration in the latest issue of Pentachondra shows a plant with strongly lobed leaves. That indicates its hybrid nature."

Can you spot three leaves? The number 11 bus plant, *Macrozamia riedlei* in Jeff Layman's greenhouse (left)

Wollemi Pine: Home gardeners become accidental citizen scientists

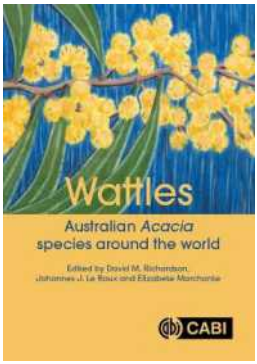
The Wollemi pine (*Wollemia nobilis*) is a critically endangered species and botanic gardens began conservation efforts almost as soon as it was described as new to science in 1994. It also caught public and professional gardening imaginations, leading to a demand for garden plants. A commercial development programme followed, with the aim of safeguarding the species in the wild by promoting its widespread use in horticulture, thereby reducing the risk of illegal and harmful collection.

Recent research* has sought to evaluate how well this aim has been met, using an online survey that actively recruited members of the public growing Wollemi pines. These 'citizen scientists' were asked questions such as where their plant was growing, its characteristics such as size and branching, and its cultivation regime.

The survey found that Wollemi pines are now well-established in gardens in many parts of the world. They are grown in a wide range of conditions, but their presence is particularly associated with a temperate climate with mean monthly minimum and maximum temperatures between 3.2 and 25.4C, above-average rainfall, and preferably loamy soil. The survey also included space for comment; encouragingly this revealed a high level of awareness of the importance of plant conservation.

The survey attacted 1510 respondents from 31 countries, the majority from Australia (65%) and the United Kingdom (21%). The high number of UK participants may well be an artefact of the survey, but it would be interesting to know if it also reflects, for example, that *Wollemia nobilis* is grown in relatively more gardens in the UK. It certainly seems to have taken well to UK environmental conditions. Regardless, the strategy of cultivation for conservation has enabled gardeners around the world to participate in its conservation, including of course APS members. Growing endangered species in our gardens fulfils the APS aim of promoting the cultivation and conservation of Australasian plants in the northern hemisphere.

* Offord, C. A., & Zimmer, H. C. (2023). Home gardens contribute to conservation of the critically endangered Wollemi Pine: Evaluation of a botanic garden-led horticultural release programme. Plants, People, Planet, 1–12. The paper is well worth reading and is free to access at **doi.org/10.1002/ppp3.10410**.



A new book about wattles

My attention was drawn to this 584 page hardback, published in November 2023, by a review in issue 155 of the ANPSA Acacia Study Group Newsletter. At £185 (Summerfield Books) I don't think I'll be buying it, but individual chapters can be purchased separately (go to **www.cabidigitallibrary.org/doi/10.1079/9781800622197.0000**).The chapters about how wattles spread around the world, Acacia classifcation and evolution, the genetics of invasive species and Australian wattles in Europe are ones that could be of particular interest.

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Philip Johnson's award winning 2013 Chelsea show garden recreated near Melbourne as the Chelsea Australian Garden