

PATRON

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LEADER

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Dear Study Group Member

Garden of Incense

Despite the drought our Garden of Incense is growing quite well. Most plants have doubled in size and some have been in flower. Many thanks must go to Betty and Sam Jack for looking after this area. After this area is stocked I would like to plant or give plants to other wildflower gardens and so spread these plants around, so if any members wish to grow plants of mints and/or send cuttings, we can distribute them.

Pro formas

I have not as yet received all the Pro-formas from everybody, but from those received it is apparent that P. ovalifolia is the most common followed by P. rotundifolia, P. cuneata, P. nivea var. induta and covers 51 different species of mints. It also showed that 16 species were lost from either root-rot fungus Phytophthora cinnamomi and/or Pythium fungi which causes damping off. The most common loss appeared to be P. cuneata then P. mellissifolia and of all things P. lasianthos which I find quite hardy.

Some of these plants are up to 8 years old which is quite a good age.

Phytophthora Cinnamomi

Apart from Terrazole fungicide and Captan there are two new compounds for the control of Phytophthora (root-rot fungi) and Pythium fungi (damp off) about to hit the market - or may be on sale even now. I have not as yet tried it but will very shortly. More on this as I get information. If anyone has tried these compounds let me know the results.

FONGARID
RIDOMIL

Another way to save plants from collar rot is to place gravel or very coarse sand on top of the soil in a pot. This then prevents the soil splashing up the stem of the plant during watering or rain, which is one cause for loss of plants.

Activities

Regional Flower Shows N.S.W.

During the month of September S.G.A.P. NSW Region held their annual flower show and the Prostanthera Study Group was invited to put on a display. With the help of group member Brian Timmis we were able to put on a display of "Mints" both potted plants and cut specimens which drew quite a few comments from the very large crowd that attended the show.

Then on the holiday weekend in October at the Blue Mountains Group annual flower show, with Evan Weatherhead (Group member) we were able to mount another display of "mint" specimens.

Garden Competitions

August arrived and my front garden started to come alive in time to win the Blue Mountains Group Garden Competition (Part Garden). Then September! The mints are starting to flower. The NSW Regional Garden Competition is judged and my front garden again takes First Prize.

Visits

In September Tess and I visited Burrendong Arboretum with the Fern Study Group. We met George and Peter Althofer. Both are well. Also saw some more new mints that have been discovered. Also a visit to the mint area proved very interesting.

October saw a bus load of SGAP visitors from the Newcastle Group on a weekend visit with the Blue Mountains Group, call into my place to see the garden. Everyone went away contented but reluctant to leave.

Financial Report

Subscriptions Paid to Date	\$46.00
Less Postage and Stationery	30.00
Rubber Stamp for Leader	6.00
Total in Hand	<u>\$10.00</u>

If a cross appears here \$2.00 subscription is Due.

Enclosures

I hope all members appreciated the enclosures listing all the mints, sub-species etc sent with the last newsletter. I now have one for you from Mr Barry Conn from the South Australian Botanical Gardens, who is carrying out the revision of mints, on How to Collect Specimens for Identification - See Enclosure "A"

Les Taylor
Leader

Prostanthera Group Members as at 1-11-81.

NSW

Mr Evan Weatherhead 63 Bellbird Cres Blaxland 2774
Mr and Mrs Sam Jack 16 Railway Pde Warrimoo 2775
Mrs Ruth Overton 11 Hill St Glenbrook 2773
Mr Roger Bagley 37 Powell St Blaxland 2774
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Mr Brian Timmis 102 Lugarno Rd Lugarno 2210
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Mr Phil Britton 4 Margaret Ave Chelmside Pk 3116

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The Lack of Field Observations and Collecting
Techniques with Reference to Prostanthera

by Barry Conn, Adelaide.

Reprint: Australian Systematic Botany Society Newsletter No 25 (December 1980)

David Symon's recent article on 'Rationalising Plant Collecting Field Trips' (A.S.B.S. Newsletter 24:11) has prompted me to express my views on two other aspects of plant collecting - the Field Label and Collecting Techniques.

I have been continually frustrated by the lack of adequate field information recorded on much of the Herbarium material of the genus Prostanthera. Of course, we have all been guilty, at some time or other of not recording adequate field information. This often results from occasional lapses into laziness, lack of time, or ignorance as to what is required for a particular plant group. However, I also suspect that in some cases, the lack of field information on Herbarium labels is not so much an accidental omission, as it is a habit. Although it is annoying, one can forgive early collectors. However there are far too many recent collections with only meagre field labels. Frequently the only information given is limited to number (not always given!), date and locality. Although I hesitate to criticise the length of the description and the level of accuracy often seen in the citation of the locality (occasionally, latitudes and longitudes even to the nearest second!) it seems to be close to useless information if the monographer does not have the funds and/or time to visit this particular locality. Furthermore, if adequate field information had been recorded, it may not have been even necessary for the monographer to visit that particular locality. However, my reason for writing this article is not to criticise the information given, but rather to draw attention to the lack of information.

Naturally, the information required varies, to a certain extent, from one plant group to another. However, irrespective of the plant group, there is one basic rule: RECORD EVERYTHING THAT MAY NOT or CAN NOT BE ADEQUATELY PRESERVED ON THE HERBARIUM MATERIAL.

1. Habitat: the herbarium specimen cannot give any information pertaining to the structure or composition of the plant community from which the sample was collected. At least, the common species should be listed. If there are several levels in the community, then the most common from each should be listed.

A brief description of the soil and rock type (if known) should be given.

A statement on the frequency is also useful, since it indicates how important the plant species is in the community.

Frequently, the species being collected is associated with certain features of the environment. For example, one taxon of Prostanthera in the Gawler Ranges (S. Aust) appears to always occur at an altitude higher than that of Dodonaea. Although this had been apparently noticed by some collectors, it had not been recorded on any field labels that I have seen.

2. Habit: unless the entire plant is collected (small herbs), the herbarium specimen cannot supply information on the shape of the foliage (crown in trees), the type and degree of branching (whether open spreading shrub or a dense compact shrub), or even how large it is. The length of the bole and the diameter at breast height (d.b.h.) of a tree, plus the overall height will allow the Monographer to estimate the age of the plant at the time of collection.

Both the above points (1 and 2) cannot be included with the herbarium specimen. The following points can be included with the specimen or they may be preserved along with most of the structure of the plant.

3. Description of the wood and bark should be included for trees and the larger woody shrubs. A wood and bark sample should be collected, ensuring that at least a small sample is included with each duplicate. Remember, wood and bark samples are rarely sent on loan to Monographers.

4. The colour of the flower should always be recorded. Frequently, the colour of the flowers is not recorded even for species which have "showy" flowers. I had to re-collect one new species of Prostanthera so that I could include the colour of the flower in the description. This new taxon had been collected several times before. Colour is frequently not preserved accurately. For example, the corolla of many red flowered Prostanthera species turn blue-green when pressed and dried, while the blue-green ones may appear maroon in herbarium material. A few yellow flowered forms turn blue-green when dried.

Since the colour patterns are quite complicated in Prostanthera, more detailed information concerning colour is preferable to merely stating whether the specimen has, for example, blue or red flowers. I would like to know:

- (a) the colour of the calyx (when in fruit, as well as in flower if both are present);
- (b) the colour of the outer surface of the corolla;
- (c) the colour of the inner surface and whether there are any markings present (such as dots and other pollination guides)