

# The Society for Growing Australian Plants

PROSTANTHERA & WESTRINGIA  
STUDY GROUP

NEWSLETTER 19

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EDITOR BRIAN TIMMIS

It was not meant to be coincidental that I would start this newsletter when the drought was over, believe me , I have been trying now for three months to get things moving. Unfortunately our newsletter has been scaled down and regular contributions missing ,well we do live in a changing world.

We probably picked the wrong year to come to this beautiful part of Australia, however , after six months exactly we got some good rain(230 mm). Normally we could expect 750 mm during the six months, instead we received less than 100 mm. On the other hand it was great , lot of outside jobs were done, we built a great shade house, developed a vegetable garden, found lots of old fences and removed them built new fences, had a large dam with an island for ducks built, some building work and lots of trees planted.

## MEMBERSHIP

The Prostanthera and Westringia study group is for all those who are interested in the cultivation of mint bushes which have been collected from the wild.

Fees: \$4.00

Please make sure that you are a financial member

Fees last paid -/-/ - Due -/-/

## STUDY GROUP T.SHIRTS

Not much response following the offer in the last newsletter, Blue Prostanthera T.shirts are probably not the in fashion at the moment, or maybe before their time. PS some people loved them.

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## A VISIT FROM ROBERT

I would say not too many people go on holidays with a bush saw packed in their cars, well Robert Miller does. I guess not many of you know Robert, being very involved with our wildflowers, the driving force of the *Prostanthera* Study Group, manages the Bankstown wildflower garden at Picnic Point also a large study group collection, currently President of SGAP East Hills and minder of remaining bush lands in the Bankstown district. Robert and family made a stop over whilst heading north this week, we were not surprised when he was able to name almost all rainforest and ground plant growing here, some of these I had not even noticed before. I think Robert thought we were not doing enough to get our rainforest areas cleared of the camphor laurel, large leafed privet and lantana. He introduced me to a method of eradication of these unwanted plants, using his bush saw he was able to cut through trunks up to 150mm in diameter close to the ground, I immediately painted 'Round up' on the freshly cut stump, the 'Round up' is sucked straight into the root system putting an end to any regrowth. For larger trees using a cordless drill holes were drilled downwards around the base and into exposed roots the 'Round up' input using an eye dropper. Several follow up applications are probably necessary to successfully put an end to these trees and eventually turn them into firewood.

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## A BOO BOO

My biggest Boo Boo this year (so far) seems that I did a lot of cuttings and managed to kill them quite easily. In April we took a trip to the Wellington area, spent a couple of enjoyable hours with George Althofer and his wife Audrey talked about a wide range of subjects. Also spent some time with Peter and Hazel at the Burrendong Arboretum, everything was looking great there, once again I managed to overload myself with cutting material. I spent most of our first day home doing the cuttings also rushing of to Wauchope to get some cutting medium, I was told it was salt free and that other people found it OK. Unfortunately I should have washed it, I now know of a few more salt resistant plants, some consultation!

## FROM THE MAIL BAG

One benefit I have received from the prolonged rains for the last year or so, is a number of seedlings that have sprung up in the garden. My yard is a fairly dryish one, and doesn't normally produce any "freebies" so it was quite handy to be able to pluck them out, pot them up, and now watch them establishing in various part of the garden.

It was all the more pleasing to have these extra plants, as the last couple of years my propagating efforts have been very disappointing, producing virtually no extra stock - which brings me to the subject of cutting exchange, I may have mentioned it before I think, but it would be handy to have a source of cuttings, (particularly rooted) so that garden losses could be replaced, and different varieties could be added to the collection, for instance the 'Killista Pink' form of *lasianthos* sounds interesting, where does one get varieties like this, I haven't heard of this one before.

Roger Bagley  
Blaxland NSW

(*P. lasianthos* 'Killista Pink' has been around for some time, some nurseries have it, Robert probably has cutting material available as for rooted cuttings you did mention it previously, I am working on it.)

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Further to my earlier letter - the *Prostanthera* I collected in January of this year in Queensland is flowering now. Not a heavy flowering but attractive enough. Robert Miller tells me that it is an unnamed species which is listed in Vol.II of Flora of S.E. Queensland as *Prostanthera Sp.No.2*. I have 3 plants from the original collection and have since grafted a plant onto *P. Nivea var. induta*. The graft looks to be very successful.

Other recent grafts done are: *P. cryptandroides*, *P. rotundifolia* (I cannot grow this on its own roots) *P. magnifica* (very easy), *P. howelliae* and *P.sp* (unnamed *Sp* from S.W. of Sydney. I must send a piece to Barry for identification).

More grafting trials to follow viz. *P. discolor*, *P. densa*, *P. calycina* (these last 2 were grafted 20.12.90 and should be ready by the middle of

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next week) and *P.prunelloides*. I'll let you know how they turn out.

Philip Strong  
Charmhaven NSW

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Enjoyed your Roadside Raiding, especially the distances from towns, makes it easier if one knows where to look

Sorry this is a little late but have been away up Queensland looking for *Prost.megacalyx* which we didn't find. Have since been talking to Peter Althofer and he has given me some direction.

In Williams book on Queensland Plants he writes that it is found around the sic area. Can anyone else give me more directions of where to find this plant?

Hope you like the mid north coast. You are close to Gibraltar National Park. Lovely mint bushes there.

Pam Welman  
Tamworth NSW

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Have you ever grown *Prostanthera spinosa*? I came by one last week. I believe it grows in SA. George Althofer writes of it in his book. Four of them had been tucked away at the back of our nursery - I believing that they were *Bursaraia spinosa* (which they do resemble). Then they flowered very prettily and I realised that they were.

Ruth Overton  
Glenbrook NSW

(An interesting usually low growing plant. I have seen this species in the Grampians (Vic) growing with *Grevillea aquifolium* and *Bavera rubioides* along a creek bank (probably will tolerate wet feet). Another form once in our collection was from Mt.Arapiles and larger form with I think with whiter flowers. Robert has also collected a form of *P.spinosa* from the Grafton (NSW) area, he is now growing this very successfully at Picnic Point.)

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My interest in the related genera *Prostanthera* and *Westringia* has, I believe, developed over the last couple of years to the extent that I would benefit greatly from membership of the Prostanthera and Westringia Study Group, as well as contribute to it in some way.

I have had varied success in growing a number of species, but am sufficiently encouraged to

continue further study of these genera, as well as other genera of the *Libeateae*, particularly *Hemiandra*, *Hemigenia* and *Microcorys*; I am particularly interested in cultivating these species whose habitats are under threat, with the ultimate aim of contributing to their preservation. One aim I intend to pursue in the near future is the grafting of "difficult" species onto more resilient rootstocks, in the hope that this will assist me to grow some of these species in our more humid climate.

Klaus Queregasser  
St Lucia Qld

(We certainly need more people expressing an enthusiastic interest in these plants, go for it.)

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### *PROSTANTHERA RHYLSTONII*

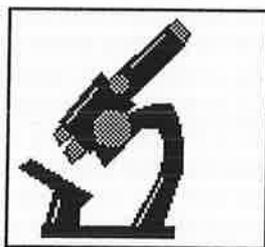
This remarkable plant has a habitat of finding a home in lots of gardens. Jeanette Closs of Tasmania recently sent a specimen for identification. I am reasonably certain the following is correct *P.rhylstonii* occurs in the Dunns Swamp area East of Kandos and Rylstone (NSW), lots of colour forms, but mainly pinks and mauves, I believe a row boat would be helpful to find the more interesting colour forms. This specie should not be confused with *P.teretifolia* (Les Taylor mentioned this in his letter). This mint is known as *P.rhylstonii* not *P.kandos* or *P.candos*, when I last spoke to Barry about the name I was under the impression it would remain *P.rhylstonii*.

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### CUTTING EXCHANGE

Robert has been taking care of the cutting exchange since our last Newsletter, he would prefer members to list the species they require although some have just asked for a selection of assorted material. Robert says that's fine with him, he will select the material looking good at the time.

Cost of packaging and postage (will be enclosed) must be sent by return mail to Robert on receipt of material : Robert Miller, Wildflower Garden, 7 Sylvan Grove, Picnic Point NSW 2213.



UNDER THE LENS - LES TAYLOR

In the absence of Barry Conns regular article the following are extracts from a recent letter from Les Taylor the former Study Group Leader.

**PROSTANTHERA  
INCISA/P.SIEBERI**

"I have two ways of identification of these *prostanthera*, first *P.sieberi* leaves are lobed or deep cut and have a petiole that when bent over is almost the length of the blade of the leaf, in other words the floral leaves are almost the same as basal leaves except that the petiole of the older leaves at bottom of bush are longer, in fact petiole is almost the length of the blade of leaf, see page 69 'Cradle of Incence'. Calyx of *P.sieberi* - both lips are nearly equal and rounded, top and bottom the same.

With *P.incisa*, floral leaves are practically the same as basal leaves with little or no petiole, in fact the whole bush appears the same all over. Again with incised leaves not as deep as *P.sieberi*, however the calyx is totally different in as the bottom lip of calyx is longer and narrower than the top lip.

However there are many hybrids of these plants, *P.sieberi/P.incisa*, but with a little study you can often pick out the salient points mentioned above and usually see which is the main parent of the plant".

**PROSTANTHERA  
SCUTELLARIOIDES and  
P.PHYLICIFOLIA**

"I always seem to find *P.phylicifolia* slightly darker green than *P.scutellarioides*, also most *P.scutellarioides* seem to have redish tinge in stems. New leaves of *P.phylicifolia* are obtuse and calyx has the lower lip rounded. Whereas the leaves of *P.scutellarioides* are acute. The calyx has the lower lip with a slight dip at the tip and shows two points and as far as I know is the only *prostanthera* to do so. One other that I've read of *P.scutata* has 3 points so you can't very well make a mistake, quite often you can easily see these points even without a glass".

Comments: My intention when writing about certain species is not to confuse anyone but to try to clear up any incorrect naming of these plants. All species I talk about I have seen in the wild and in nurseries so being a lay-person I am only able to be logical, maybe I should not try to match plants with names. The botanic revision is currently under way and I will certainly be relieved when we are able to know the names of a great many of our eastern *prostanthera* species. We can all do without this confusion, perhaps its easier to go the nursery and buy new exciting *Callistemon* and *Grevillea* hybrids all correctly labelled and have no confusion. I relate to what appears to be a simple mistake, a photo and description was published in a book 'Australia's Native Flowers', not an expensive book but it certainly adds to the confusion. To me the photo is obviously *P.serpyllifolia ssp serpyllifolia*, however it was named *P.aspalathoides* and so described in detail.

THE STUDY GROUP - BRIAN TIMMIS

I hope members read and understood Roberts article on P.5 in the last newsletter, it basically covers all aspects of what we are doing and need to do, we need ideas on projects for our future.

PROJECTS

1. The Study Group Collection

At the moment Robert is custodian of our main collection, apart from the study group, various

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botanic gardens and Burrendong Arboretum maintain good collections. Two groups have expressed an interest in organising a potted and/or planted study group garden, one Kevin Stokes of the Newcastle SGAP and Barbara Buchanan of the Wangaratta SGAP(Vic.).

As a project also I intend to start and maintain a study group garden and pot collection here at our Gum Scrub property. A suitable area is now being prepared and soon to be fenced, our new dam, now full (thanks to the recent rain), will provide the watering.

## 2. Photo and Slide Collection

Can anyone help in this department, at the moment I cannot say we have even a few good slides. Offers in the past have been made but nothing was forthcoming, incidentally they have to be "Freebies" we have no funds to buy them.

## 3. Local Labiataes

An interesting project I have started is to collect local species for cultivation, study and herbarium specimens. Information regarding the whereabouts of some of these are available at the Wauchope Forestry Commission's herbarium.

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## MY THOUGHTS - BRIAN TIMMIS

Back to the boring financial story, I have difficulty in explaining things because I find it difficult to understand them. We were promised funds but we are not getting them. I think there is more to spend funds on than just a newsletter twice a year. The generous donations from members have been used only for the newsletter, I would much prefer to support the Robert Miller collection with even the basics, like potting mix and fertilizer. SGAP continues to have its head in the sand regarding this study group and has virtually even no communication with me on this matter, which I consider important. It is apparent, that being a layman in horticulture has some bearing on the above matter. I will not bring this subject again into future newsletters and will continue to be Leader of the Study Group until such time as a new leader is forthcoming. I leave it there.

## MEMORIES

### OF MANLY (S.M.H.)

Three-day wildflower shows were introduced in the 1880's and attracted thousands of visitors. George Arousseau, whose father had a bakery in The Corso, recalled in his Reminiscences of Old Manly 1868-1880 that "The Ocean Beach in early 1870 was in its natural state, sand dunes and tea-tree scrub where the stone wall now stands. The Norfolk Island Pines ... were not yet planted and the Steyne Hotel had large paddocks fenced with three-rail fences..."

Wild flowers, he remembered, "grew in abundance, native roses, flannel flowers, christmas bells, heaths, geebung and five corners. The hills all round Manly were a paradise of native flora [including] beautiful christmas bush trees 25 to 30 feet high which in season used to be one mass of red flowers. It was a wasteful time for no-one had realised that Australian flora is unique ... At Christmas time men would go out with carts and ruthlessly hew them down and bring them to Manly selling them to shop-keepers to tie on the posts of verandahs for a few miserable days of decoration, after which they were finally burnt."

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## REPORT ON 'ADVANCES IN LABIATE SCIENCE' CONFERENCE

Barry Conn

The first 'Advances in Labiate Science' conference was held at the Royal Botanic Gardens and Jodrell Laboratory, Kew (Richmond, United Kingdom) from 2-5 April 1991. This was a joint conference supported and organized by the Royal Botanic Gardens (Kew), the Phytochemical Society of Europe and the Linnean Society of London. Approximately 120 participants, representing 25 countries took part in the conference. The conference was introduced by three 'overview' papers, namely, 'A global survey of the biogeography of the Labiatae' (I. Hedge), 'A chemical overview of the Labiatae' (P. Richardson) and 'A phylogenetic evaluation of suprageneric groupings in the Labiatae' (P. Cantino). The endemic Australian Labiatae was discussed in a paper by myself ('Relationships within the tribe Prostanthereae'). This paper also provided a different interpretation of the phylogenetic relationships between the Verbenaceae and Labiatae compared to that presented by Philip Cantino. Several papers were presented on the chemistry of the family, namely, 'Essential oils as taxonomic markers in *Mentha*' (S Kokkini), 'Significance of the terpenoids on the Labiatae' (M. Cole), 'Flavonoides of the Labiatae' (F. Tomas-Barberan) and 'Chemical components of Labiatae oils and their exploitation' (B. Lawrence). Phylogenetic relationships using chloroplast DNA variation was presented by R. Olmstead ('Chloroplast DNA in the Asteridae: phylogenetic implications for the Lamiales') and S. Wagstaff ('A phylogenetic analysis of chloroplast DNA variation in tribe Mentheae, Labiatae'). Several papers were presented on the breeding systems and pollen morphology. These included, 'Breeding systems in Labiatae' (S. Owens & J. Uberta), 'The megagametophyte in Labiatae' (P. Rudall & L. Clark), 'The potential value of pollen morphology as an additional taxonomic character in subtribe Ociminae (Ocimeae: Nepetoideae)' (M. Harley), 'Pollen morphology in subfamily Lamiioideae (Labiatae) and its phylogenetic implications' (Mones Albu-Asab), 'Pollen morphology of the genus *Salvia* in Jordan and the neighbouring countries' (S. Al-Eisawi) and an 'Overview of pollination biology in Lamiaceae' (R Huck). The taxonomic usefulness of the fruits were presented by A. Paton ('The adaptive significance of calyx and nutlet morphology in *Scutellaria* L.') and O. Ryding ('Pericarp structure and phylogeny within Lamiaceae subfamily Nepetoideae tribe Ocimeae'). R. Harley discussed 'The Hyptis alliance in the New World' and T. Krestovskaja presented 'A systematic study in *Leonurus*'. Ethnobotanical aspects were dealt with by two presentations, namely 'Ethnobotany of Labiatae in the Old World' (A. Rivera-Nunez & C. Obon-de-Castro). Dr Ramamoorthy provided an excellent summary of the meeting and chaired an informative general discussion session. I offer my sincere congratulations to the organisers of what is hoped to be the first of many conferences on the Lamiales.

### TALKS ON PROSTANTHERA

21st June                      Mid North Coast SGAP at Port  
Macquarie

8th October                    New England SGAP at  
Armidale

A speaker has been requested for Para Districts  
SGAP Adelaide and Wangaratta SGAP Vic - anyoffers

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