

Regions

# THE NATIONAL MINT

28 October 2000

Volume 2, Issue 1

VALE

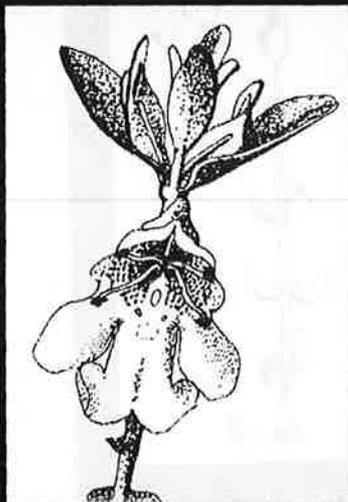


LES TAYLOR

Newsletter of the Prostanthera & Westringia Study Group  
Leader: Robert Miller 13 Park Road, Bulli NSW 2516 Phone/fax 42 846768

## VALE:

On Saturday 15th September, the Patron and founding member of our Group, Les Taylor passed away after a long illness. Les was a respected and active member of SGAP, especially within the Blue Mountains and Fern Study Groups.



## ALL IS NOT LOST

After eviction from its home, Illawarra Grevillea Park, Bulli, the study groups potted collection was kindly granted It is most unfortunate that a refugee status at Jan Peters period of economic family home for over one year. rationalism can have such a I am happy to inform devastating impact upon the members the collection has collections contained within since been granted permanent our public gardens. resident status - what remains of the collection, is now Prior to leaving Sylvan Grove, thriving, planted at the my staff and I Cont. page 2.

## THE ILLAWARRA GREVILLEA PARK

Located at Bulli, and situated including an old country at the foot of the Illawarra church, rainforest gully, a pond Escarpment, where the complete with Silver Perch, mountains meet the sea, the Water Dragons and native Illawarra Grevillea Park has a waterfowl. An array of other lot to offer visitors wishing to wildflowers are interspersed spend a day enjoying the throughout the garden natural amenity of the region. including Banksia, Crowea, Persoonia, and of course, a

Primarily highlighting the large display of our marvelous diversity in the genus Mintbushes. Grevillea, this garden is a bird watchers delight.

The Park is open for public display some weekends during

Under the inspiration of Ray April/May, July and September. Brown and a small group of Contact Ray Brown on 42 dedicated volunteers, the park 849216 for opening dates. features additional attractions

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**All IS Not Lost cont.**

planted hundreds of specimens of *Prostanthera* and other genera, adding greatly to the spectacular array of mature and semi-mature plants. This we hoped would help the garden weather the storm, helping to ensure that a large proportion of the collection would survive providing a spectacular display for years to come.

Sadly, some of the newer plantings have perished, whole sections of wild sourced material, unnamed species and colour forms being eliminated from the collection.

I was informed by one staff member at the gardens, in reply to my question "how are the mint bushes faring" - "oh them, I have just finished pulling out hundreds of them things last week"

I promptly asked permission to obtain some cutting material to salvage what remained and was not contained within the potted collection.

In this regard, the study group is indebted to Sid Pinner, who

has greatly assisted in the maintenance of the collection, taking cuttings and grafting many of the harder to grow species. Much of Sids work will be seen for years to come as the recent plantings mature at the Illawarra Grevillea Park .

Sadly the demise of the mints is not confined to Bankstown. I recently visited Sir Joseph Banks Wildflower Garden at Karrella, hoping to obtain material from a pink flowered form of *Prostanthera staurophylla* and view the array of mintbushes Brian Timmis and myself had planted there. Disappointingly, all but a few hardy forms have died.

Some recent plantings have occurred but these are confined to common nursery plants. Tony Knight, the head gardener, is keen to renew the collection but is currently confined to upgrading infrastructure within the reserve.

Members may wish to assist Tony by donating excess plants sometime in the future.

### PROSTANTHERA & WESTRINGIA IDENTIFICATION AND THE CUTTING EXCHANGE SERVICE

**Name That Mintbush  
Correctly:**

For the general enthusiast knowing the correct botanical name for your mintbushes is almost an impossible task.

An array of unnamed species and sub-species await formal recognition. Many forms have been introduced into cultivation

and widely dispersed - regrettably most, over time, losing their origin details. A plethora of garden hybrids have also added to this confusion. For a professional entity as a whole, the nursery trade has an appalling track record for correct labeling and is a major contributor to perpetuating incorrect naming. Many members, including myself

**NOTE:**

All  
correspondence

to

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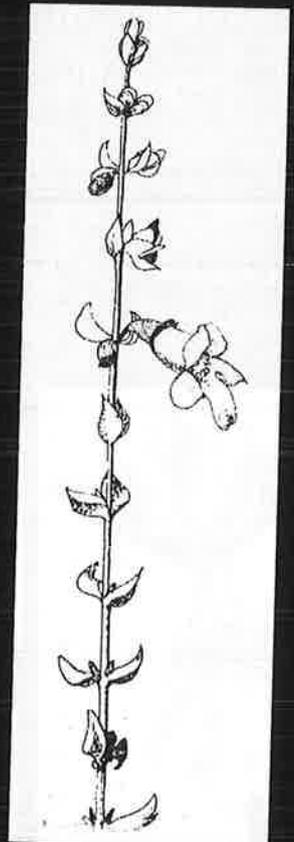
For replies

include a

stamped self

addressed

envelope .



What's in  
the next  
edition of  
*Lasianthos*

Further  
localities for  
*Plectranthus  
cremnus* by  
Steve  
Clemesha

NPWS Rare  
Plant Survey -  
*Prostanthera  
cryptandroides*  
*Prostanthera  
discolor*  
*Prostanthera  
stricta*

The NSW  
Threatened  
Species  
Conservation  
Act -  
How you can  
protect your  
patch.

STOP PRESS  
Brian Timmis  
won the Native  
Garden  
Section, The  
Waterwise  
Garden and  
received 3rd  
place large  
residential.

## Prostanthera & Westringia Identification cont.

have frequently pointed out obvious discrepancies, mostly to no avail. I for one often wonder how long will it be before someone in this age of litigation takes out legal action.

For those of you who do want to know "what plant is that?". Its easy! For plant identification send as complete a specimen as possible - preferably fresh; including material suitable for cuttings. These can be wrapped loosely, in lightly dampened paper enclosed within a carton. Prior notice by phone is advisable before dispatch by overnight post. Alternatively, a dried specimen can be posted between sheets of stiff card. In both cases, origin details, size and features such as flower colour should be included.

### The Cutting Exchange

I hope to fully reinstate the cutting exchange for study group members in the Autumn, 2001.

Initially, however it would assist me if members could compile a list of what species and forms they are growing. If possible, the origin

of each plant should be included, e.g. nursery purchase, study group collection number or garden seedling. All wild sourced plants should include location details.

I would appreciate cutting material from the following plants lost from the main collection: a variegated species originating from Woy Woy, a pink form of *Prostanthera staurophylla* and colour forms, especially yellow, of *P. aspalathoides*.

Wild sourced material is always welcomed - however be responsible and be legal.

## LASIANTHOS

Contribution to our publication *Lasianthos* is always welcome.

Members can forward articles for publication electronically to my wife's university email address [z7133782@student.unsw.edu.au](mailto:z7133782@student.unsw.edu.au) or on disk. Hard copies should be preferably typed, hand written short articles are also accepted.

Contribute now! Your observations are important!

## Brian Timmis - Where is he now?

Brian, former leader of the Study Group, now lives at Yanderra in the southern highlands of New South Wales. True to form, and a year after moving, won the Wollondilly Shire Council native garden section. This year, his garden will really blow the judges away. Brian has greatly increased his plantings, with of course,

mintbushes dominating the landscape. A large section of his property remains in a natural state. I identified 166 species within a few hours including 6 species of *Persoonia*, 2 of which are classified as endangered.

Brian has accepted my request for him to be Patron of the Study Group.

## VALE: Les Taylor - Thoughts from Brian Timmis & Robert Miller

I would like to say in a tribute to Les we have lost a man who loved Australian Plants, especially the mint bushes.

It was at a S.G.A.P. wildflower show in 1979 at Peakhurst that I first met Les, he was conducting a *Prostanthera* display, I was rapt. Les and his floral display introduced me to something special, something I could have missed out on had I not met Les.

The *Prostanthera* Study Group was formed in 1980, Les was the Leader with about 15 members, producing several newsletters until he resigned in October 1983. Les asked me to be the new leader, offering his assistance and advice to all members of this group. Les was never backward in advising me either by phone or letter during the following years.

Following the passing on of George Alfhofer, the Study Group Patron in March 1993, Les agreed to be the new Patron of the group.

Although I lost contact with Les following my resignation as Study Group leader I can never forget the help and generosity he gave me. He was highly respected by all members.

For those of us who collect, propagate and grow our magnificent mints we will not forget Les and his impact upon us. I am sure his booming voice will be missed by all.

My condolences to his family.

Brian Timmis

### A MESSAGE FROM THE HEAVENS

"That's *sieberi* and *incisa*" came a booming from afar. Was this a message from the heavens, an answer to the puzzle confronting me? There

was no lightning or flashes of light. Only a vision - no it was not the God of Horticulture - but I was soon to find out it was the "God of Mints" - Les Taylor.

That's how I first met Les, in the first few months of working at Sylvan Grove.

For weeks, I had been trying to understand the relationships in the naming of a number of plant genera found within the garden. For the life of me, I could not understand how all the diversity of plants (e.g. grey leaved and glabrous leaved forms) labeled *Eremophila glabra* could be all one species, or when mints labeled *Prostanthera sieberi* and *P. incisa* could be different when they looked virtually the same.

Les had no formal botanical training, but was able to explain to me that *Prostanthera incisa* had a lower calyx lobe longer and half the width of the upper lip, whereas in *P. sieberi* they were more or less equal. This however did not solve my dilemma only added to it. Les was on the right track - some plants require very close examination to discern differences. Unfortunately the plants that he pointed out as those species turned out to be "of garden origin", seedlings kindly donated from his garden. I was now aware that some mints hybridise freely and that many in cultivation were most likely to be hybrids. I now realised if I was ever to come closer to solving what species was what in *Prostanthera* I needed to source them from the wild.

It was from this encounter, and soon afterwards meeting Brian Timmis and Hazel, Peter and George Alfhofer that began my mintbush wanderings.

Thanks Les, you introduced many of us to our magnificent mints.