

THE NATIONAL MINT

PROSTANTHERA & WESTRINGIA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER

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Dear Members,

Firstly I would like to thank Brian on behalf of the study group for his enthusiasm and commitment over the last eight years as study group leader. In this time we have seen the group achieve many of its objectives: namely the promotion and study of the genera *Prostanthera* and *Westringia*. To reach this end the group embarked on the building up of a large living collection of wild source and horticultural meritorious hybrids and forms. This culminated in a number of spectacular displays of *Prostanthera* both at S.G.A.P. Wildflower Spectaculars and at Spring in the Gardens, Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney. I think it is not just co-incidence that the range of Mint Bushes found in the nursery trade has increased, as I feel sure our efforts have contributed to promoting the attributes of these plants to the general public.

Our Newsletter rose from its humble beginnings to be of a high quality, botanically correct and informative contribution to the study of Australian plants under the guidance of Barry Conn and Brian's determination to get the *Newsletter* out irrespective of the personal cost in subsidising our *Newsletter* and many of our groups activities. I am certain that all members are delighted that Brian is going to remain an active member of our group as his assistance in furthering our groups aims will be eagerly sought and we look forward to hearing about the Mint bushes of the Mid-North Coast and his assured success with them at Gum Scrub.

WELL, WHAT NOW?

Forwards, of course! The study of Australian plants has never been more intense, with the revision of many of the Genera nearing completion or recently completed, new species being discovered both out in the field and from herbarium specimens. With this, unfortunately, comes the sad realisation of how threatened many of our plant species are.

I see this situation, in regards to our study group, as an exciting challenge in which we can all contribute to the knowledge of the Australian labiates. Many of our members have already contributed valuable field information and specimens to aid Barry Conn in his revision work, others are

helping to maintain species and forms in cultivation, experimenting with grafting and cultivation requirements. Some members are liaising with local native gardens and Regional botanic gardens in their area providing plants, advice or cutting material. This is all well worthwhile!

I would like to see our participation increase in all these areas, with individuals or groups of members concentrating on a group of species, species complex or those found in their local region. Burrendong Arboretum, Myall Park Botanic Gardens, The Hunter Regional Botanic Gardens have all indicated their need for plant material. I am sure we can provide plants or material for these worthwhile projects.

THE NEWSLETTER

A dilemma!

I would like to see frequent communications between our members. However, it is essential that we maintain the high standard of publication in our *Newsletter*. This raises the problem of finances. Currently our only source of funding is by membership dues or donation, this being the limitation of our groups endeavours. I welcome discussion on the direction that the *Newsletter* should take, with thoughts on increasing fees, fewer newsletters, or sponsorship, etc. Until our financial situation is worked out I intend to create a 'What's Happening Newsletter' similar to this (but hopefully news from all our members) with a quality product once or twice a year depending on available finances. This issue of this *Newsletter* is here called '*The National Mint*'. Other names considered for the *Newsletter* have included, 'Minty Moments', 'Mint News'. Help! Has anyone got a better name?.

Barry Conn has again offered his editorial skill for our major publication which will ensure, with your input, many hours of enjoyable reading in the future. One suggestion for the title of this publication is '*LASIANTHOS*' - named after the first species to be described in *Prostanthera*. Any opinions or suggestions about a name for this publication are also welcome.

Species Inventory

The most important task to be undertaken now is to ascertain what species, cultivars, colour forms and most importantly wild source material each of us is currently growing. Compilation of this information will enable us to have a more effective cutting exchange program and propagation workshops, perhaps forming regional groups (a number of people within a particular area) a complete collection of species. The greatest obstacle (besides the financial one) facing a group such as ours is how dispersed our membership is, linking together a common objective over such distances is not easy, conversely however this dispersal could be of great benefit

to the group with member within a region concentrating on growing species and forms found locally. Cuttings from these plants could be exchanged and trialing other species from far a field may give us an insight into cultural requirements of a number of difficult species.

Study Group Meetings and Workshops

I would like to hold a number of study group field trips and workshops. I know the difficulties involved with interstate members attending such functions however I would encourage such members even as a part of their local group to organise such activities and to forward the dates to be published in our 'What's Happening Newsletter'.

At this stage I envisage a meeting cutting/plant exchange day at Sylvan Grove in early to mid August to discuss the future direction of the group (interstate members feel free to write to voice your ideas these will be published before the meeting date) and perhaps a propagation day in October and February.

Finally, subscriptions fall due at the end of the financial year, a fee of five dollars will be charge for 1992-93 season and should be SENT to :- 7 Sylvan Grove, Picnic Point, 2213 and cheques made payable to 'ASGAP *Prostanthera* and *Westringia* Study Group'. This will entitle subscribers to become members of the group, one copy of each edition of the 'What's Happening Newsletter' and access to the cutting exchange. As the financial situation of the group will be tight it will be necessary that payment of outstanding fees be forthright, non-financial members will receive the 'What's Happening Newsletter' for one edition *only* after the financial year Sorry to end the newsletter on such note, but I am sure you all see the necessity of such action. I am keen to hear from you all and look forward to your ideas and input and feel assured we can continue to improve upon our knowledge of the Australian labiates.

The future distribution of the 'Old-style Newsletter' is unclear. Current levels of donations and subscriptions to the Study Groups have not covered the distribution to members plus the number of obligatory free copies. This in no way infers our lack of appreciation for this generous support, but Barry and Brian have previously met this shortfall in funding for the *Newsletter*. To have increased the subscription of the Study Group to cover this seemed an inappropriate way of dealing with this problem. Therefore, it is suggested that the 'Old-style Newsletter' becomes a separate, additional publication. Please let me know of your views on this. Do you want the 'Old-style Newsletter' continued? How often do you want it? If you have any questions, please ask!