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Association of Societies for Growing Australian Plants

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Dear Members,

Well hello again, spring has quickly passed taking with it most of the mintbush flowers. Notable exceptions being, the long flowering species: *Prostanthera magnifica*, *P. porcata*, *P. linearis* "Woronora River", *P. linearis* "Woronora River" x *P. stricta*, *P. calycina*, *P. spinosa* "white form", *P. spinosa* "Grafton form", *Westringia longifolia*, *W. blakeana* and most of the *Plectranthus* species. As the festive season rapidly approaches and secateurs are busy pruning, *Prostanthera lasianthos* in all its forms and blossoms will come into their own. Queen of them all the is the beautiful "Kallista Pink".

The propagation and grafting workshop was well attended by members of the Blue Mountains Group, the Picnic Point connection and two members from the Parramatta Hills Group. The day was devoted to the propagation of species endemic to the Greater Blue Mountains region for planting in the Glenbrook Native Gardens. Species propagated included *P. rhombea* (glabrous and hairy forms), *P. caerulea*, *P. incana* large leaf form from the Valley of the Waters, *P. stricta*, *P. sp. aff. stricta*, *P. prunelloides* "Northern Wollemi National Park form", *P. cryptandroides*, *P. violacea* and *P. rugosa*.

The grafting workshop created lots of interest with all who attended. Once the simplicity of the technique was demonstrated at first hand, everyone felt confident and left the day with a wide assortment of cuttings determined to master the art of grafting. We look forward to hear of the outcomes.

A full report on grafting will feature in the main *Prostanthera and Westringia Newsletter* - "Lasianthos"; as well as articles on recent taxonomic revisions and field work. All going well, this will be hot off the press in January or February. Members may be interested to know most of my personal living collection has been entered onto a database with a new numbering system. It is pleasing to know we have over 170 living accessions of *Prostanthera* and *Westringia* in a central collection. The numbering system I trust will make reference and identification of the origin details of a particular clone easily accessible. Members when requesting material or distributing plants or cuttings can simply refer to or

record the particular species or forms number. I will endeavour to print a full list of *Prostanthera* and *Westringia* species in "Lasianthos".

Response to my call for members to record what they are growing has been poor since the initial flurry of response. I cannot stress how important this initial simple collection of data from members is to the successful networking of plant material and information between members. No matter how unworthy you may think your collection may be, you may indeed be growing the only living specimen of a form or species in cultivation. This is especially so if you are growing wild source material. It amuses me, when SGAP members say "I saw a mintbush on a walk". My most often reply is, "Did you take a pressing or cutting material?". Often the reply is, "It was only *P. rotundifolia* or *P. ovalifolia*", or even more frustrating is, "It was so common in this small area I didn't think it was worth collecting. It was probably only and you would know what it was anyway". Often we have a similar attitude to the plants we are growing because we may have collected it from a wild source and locally it may be referred to as *P. rotundifolia* or *P. ovalifolia*. This assumption is one contributing reason why difficult genera taxonomically such as *Prostanthera* are still unresolved. Collections of a particular species complex may be completely inadequate over its full range often as a direct result of such attitudes. This inadequacy often leaves a confusing picture in which no worthwhile conclusions can be drawn.

I am pleased to report Brian Timmis is continuing to add to our knowledge of the Labiates in his local area, finding a number of interesting plants. His most recent success was finding a beautiful white form of *P. scutellariodes*. He is currently writing a full account of his exploits and we look forward to this.

I would like thanks members who have provided cutting material. Special thanks is extended to Noel Cartwright of Grenfell for supplying beautiful colour forms of the Brundah Mints. Incidentally Noel's native garden won the areas garden competition over even all the exotics. Well done indeed. Brian Timmis also has sent a variety of colour forms of mints in his local area. Jim Thompsons provided material of a very interesting plant I had not previously seen before and whose identity has not yet been determined. Barry Conn thinks from my verbal description it is most likely to be a Western Australian *Hemigenia*.

Finally, I wish you all the best for the festive season and look forward to hearing from you all soon.

See You Soon
Robert Miller

P.S Could someone from the Newcastle area comment on the rumour that *Prostanthera staurophylla* has been found in the Hunter Valley.