

THE NATIONAL MINT

PROSTANTHERA & WESTRINGIA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER

ISSN 1039 3560

February 1993 No. 24

Association of Societies for Growing Australian Plants

PATRON: George Althofer
60 Thorton Street
Wellington NSW 2820

LEADER: Robert Miller
7 Sylvan Grove
Picnic Point NSW 2213

Dear Members,

A Rare Mintbush has a Brighter Future

Prostanthera densa, an uncommon mintbush of coastal NSW has recently been discovered at Kurnell by staff of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney. The species is also found in the Nelson Bay area near Newcastle, from a handful of plants at Cronulla, from one small population in the Royal National Park, one population from Helensburgh, and one from the northern shores of Jervis Bay. This latter population has been referred to as *P. marifolia* or *P. densa/marifolia* complex.

Sutherland Council is to undertake a revegetation program of the foreshore esplanade walkway which will incorporate the replanting of *P. densa*. Obtainment of plant material should be relatively 'easy' as one nursery Sydney Wildflower Nursery has been propagating *P. densa* from Cronulla for a number of years. Large numbers of plants are periodically available in the nursery trade. This project is possibly the first revegetation works to incorporate an endangered mintbush in NSW. I intend to report on the progress on this work in more detail in the near future.

NEWSFLASH

The *Prostanthera and Westringia Study Group* has been invited to participate in developing a *Prostanthera* garden at the **Grevillea Park** at Bulli. Ray Brown has been industriously negotiating and implementing its existence now for a number of years. Although Grevilleas will be the main thrust of the garden, sections of the site have natural features most suitable for ornamental rainforest plantings and shade tolerant species such as some *Prostanthera* as they are overtopped by majestic specimens of Blackbutt.

I am sure Ray is relieved that finally, initial plantings look like being undertaken in the middle of this year. To assist in this endeavour we will be holding a cutting day at **Bankstown Native Garden, Sylvan Grove** on March 13th. It is my

intention that plants propagated on the day be equally divided between the **Grevillea Park** and **Burrendong Arboretum**. Bring secateurs and cutting material of worthwhile hybrids and wildsource material, ensuring they are well labelled with origin details.

MEMBERS FORUM

Six years ago Joyce Ward of Mt. Glorious, Qld, found a mint bush on the Daguiar Range, northwest of Pine Rivers. She has only recently been able to regain access as a tourist development had blocked access to the general public. It is similar in appearance to *P. nivea* but has blue flowers. Joyce hopes to be able to send cutting material in the near future. She has made a request for cuttings of *P. lepidota*. This species is now considered to be a broad leaf variant of *P. ringens*. Can any member help Joyce with this request? I have not been able to obtain material of this species either. I am sure Joyce, like myself, would welcome cutting material from any source.

Joyce also writes, "*Plectranthus* is used as compost". I am not quite sure if Joyce regards *Plectranthus* as a weed or is she merely offering a tip for a no longer wanted ground cover. Some species such as *Plectranthus parviflorus* in suitable conditions can be a little invasive at times, but are easily removed.

Jeanette Closs of Kingston, Tasmania writes that it is nearly two years since we moved from our house in Austins Ferry where we had an extensive garden which included many *Prostanthera* and *Westringia* plants. Much of this plant material came from George and Peter Althofer, for which I have always been very grateful. This garden was on a steep rocky hillside and the maintenance was getting more difficult as the years went by. We are now on a reasonably flat block with lots of room for more plantings. Dodonaeas are my first priority, being leader of the study group, but the mints come a close second. I managed to take cuttings from the Austins Ferry garden, many of which are now planted in the Kingston site. I have included a list of species recorded for Tasmania, but only those marked with a * have I only seen in the wild, perhaps I should start a search. *Prostanthera cuneata*, *P. lasianthos* *, *P. rotundifolia*, *Westringia angustifolia*, *W. brevifolia* *, *W. brevifolia* var. *raeighii*, *W. rigida* *, *W. rubiaefolia*. Jeanette also included a list of *Prostanthera* and *Westringias* growing in her garden. In doing so, as well as including a small sprig of some plants, enabled me to correctly name species she felt needed verification. Some plants of special interest growing in Jeanette's garden include a rare red and cream form of *P. aspalathoides*, a white form of *P. melissifolia*, *W. angustifolia* and *W. rubiaefolia*.

COMING EVENTS

March 13th - Propagation Day at **Bankstown Native Garden, Sylvan Grove.**

May 1st - Visit to Ray Brown's **Grevillea Park** and propagation day.

We are deeply saddened to hear of the death of our patron, Mr George Althofer. He died on the 8th March 1993. We have lost a great naturalist.