

THE NATIONAL MINT

PROSTANTHERA & WESTRINGIA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER

ISSN 1039 3560

SEPTEMBER 1994 No. 29

Association of Societies for Growing Australian Plants

PATRON: Les Taylor
4 Prospect St
Blacktown NSW 2148

LEADER: Robert Miller
7 Sylvan Grove
Picnic Point NSW 2213

A long overdue hello to all members is in order.

The study group is still alive and well, although a re-think as to the presentation of our newsletters has been necessary due to financial constraints. The distribution of The National Mint every second month has been put on hold temporarily so as to accrue sufficient funds to allow for the production of another addition of *Lasianthos* ahead of the extrapolated date of 1996-7 as outlined in the last National Mint Newsletter.

Our request for funding to the New South Wales Region was apparently received well with the committee members acknowledging the standard of presentation and content of the publication. Discussion was made concerning the financial outlay of publication (cost, as outlined in The National Mint December 1993) as to whether or not this could be justified when a less costly format would also disseminate the same information. It was also suggested that the utilisation of existing Society resources may well prove to be a viable proposition by lowering the cost of production thereby enabling us to continue with the same quality of presentation. Lyn Thompson kindly offered to look into this further and will be discussing the idea with Les Taylor.

Displays

Jim and Wilma Thompson have been a driving force behind the group in recent times actively participating in cutting days and successfully propagating a large number of plants some of which have been donated to Burrendong and The Grevillea Park at Bulli. Recently they also organised two displays which were of a high standard, creating interest and providing information into a section of native plants poorly known amongst the general public. The displays were held at the Australian Winter Garden Festival, Rouse Hill and Floriade, Gosford.

Bob Wilson kindly donated excellent slides from which Jim and Wilma were able to have photos enlarged, adding greatly to the presentation of the display. The Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney, kindly allowed the group to borrow displays depicting current taxonomic research into Labiates undertaken by Herbarium Staff. In this regard I would like to thank Peter Richards and Barry Conn for making this possible and to Sid Pinner of the East Hills Group for transporting them to Rouse Hill.

Grevillea Park

On a recent visit to The Grevillea Park at Bulli, Ray Brown showed me the areas into which our *Prostanthera* and *Westringia* have been planted. It was interesting to note the growth response of species within areas and between areas. Most favourable growth was obtained in areas of least competition ie. raised garden beds. Many of these plants were donated by Brian Timmis from material collected from the hills behind Port Macquarie. However, the drop dead syndrome was also apparent with the odd plant turning up its toes whilst adjacent plants looked perfectly healthy. The majority of the plants donated by members are located on a northerly aspect under a canopy of Eucalypts in the existing soil. Whilst growth of many species was slow survival rate was excellent especially in the light that rainfall has been low. Favourable conditions should see these plants make an excellent display in the next few years.

Excuses Excuse's

I also have been busy although not as involved with *Prostanthera* as I would like with protracted local environmental concerns taking much of my time. We were successful in preserving a number of important although pitifully small remnant habitats. At Greenacre where the redevelopment of the Urban Transport Authorities Bus Workshop into high density cluster homes was to see Greenacres Last Green Acre, a Woollybutt stand containing *Acacia pubescens* and number of other vulnerable species, destroyed. The other was the habitat of the endangered Green and Gold Bell Frog in the adjacent Strathfield Municipality, threatened by warehouse construction which was to decimate between 65 - 70% of the Creek in the redevelopment of an area of land previously owned by Telecom. In both instances years of negotiations with local councils and State Government Departments including Department of Planning, National Parks and Wildlife Service, National Trust, Heritage Commission etc have resulted in a satisfactory outcome.

Rediscovery

In October 1993 my Wife and I successfully rediscovered an unnamed *Prostanthera* in the Somersby area which was presumed extinct ie it had not been collect for over 50 years, unfortunately only to discover the area is in imminent threat of being turned into an industrial estate. The National Parks and Wildlife Service have carried out surveys to try and locate the species within the surrounding

Brisbane Waters National Park, but to date have not located any plants.

Interesting Study

A new member , Dave Tierney is currently studying the breeding mechanisms of the species and population status as part of studies with the University of New England. He has kindly agreed to pass on his findings to be incorporated in the next edition of *Lasianthos*.

Expatriated

Barry Conn recently took up his appointment as the Australian Botanical Liaison Officer at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. The position is of one year duration, with the appointee being selected from amongst suitably qualified botanists throughout Australia. Barry's wife, Helen and son Blair will join Barry and his three daughters in late October.

Their stay at Kew will enable Barry to again study many of the type specimens of *Labiates* first hand but this time with sufficient time to absorb the essential details needed to clarify further some of the taxonomic problems within the family especially the East Coast *Prostanthera*. We look forward to the outcome.

Specialist's Directory

The Tasmanian Region has begun a specialist directory to help answer members questions with the motto "the answer should be as far away as your phone"

Norma Duff is nominated as the *Prostanthera* and *Boronia* expert. Any questions? Ring 004923119

Where and What Now?

Brian Timmis has again moved, this time to the beautiful Kangaroo Valley. The Shoalhaven River catchment is an immense tract of rugged country and as an aid in the location of *Prostanthera* Brian has decided that aerial recognisance is what is needed and is currently organising a foray by helicopter. I've been invited along but I'm not as yet quite sure what my job is? So if you see someone dangling by a piece of rope brandishing secateurs you know who it is.

Robert Miller

**PS Articles
are needed
for our
newsletter.**

Please put pen to paper.

