

Region

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THE NATIONAL MINT

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Brian Timmis

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Newsletter of the Prostanthera & Westringia Study Group
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STUDY GROUP

Membership

Fees Now

\$10

Due June 30

2005

Welcome to another edition of the National Mint.

Thank you to all members who have renewed their subscription.

As reported in our last newsletter we are now well on the way to accruing sufficient funds for the publication of another edition of our journal "LASIANTHOS". However the call to put pen to paper has virtually fallen on deaf ears. Please **put pen to paper** and **contribute** an article, a letter or ideas for inclusion. Our newsletters are much more interesting with **your ideas!!!** A big thank you to those members and groups who have forwarded paper clippings and ideas for inclusion for this edition of the National Mint.

The Study Group is continuing to make steady inroads into its objective of housing a "Living Collection" at the Illawarra Grevillea Park at Bulli, NSW. Species occurring within NSW are well represented but the collection of Mint-bushes and Westringia from other states and territories still remains paltry. I have supplied a number of groups with an assortment of cutting material on visits and at talks. Members of those groups were often able to supply new material for the collection (see *Talk Report* for details).

There is now ample cutting material of many Mint-bushes and a number of new Westringia. A list of recognised species, forms and cultivars available as cuttings for exchange is again included.

APS Tasmania Assists Living Collection: Dick Burns has kindly initiated discussions and volunteered to be the liaison person to provide Tasmanian Prostanthera and Westringia material to the Study Group collection. Refer correspondence from Dick Burns for further details.

Potted On & Planted Out: Brian Timmis has generously donated funding and Ray Brown organised the acquisition 4 cubic metres of nursery grade potting medium. This allowed me to repot the large



Prostanthera "gilesii"

(Continued on page 2)

Do you know where a Prostanthera or Westringia grows in the wild?
Why not document its location by taking part in

ATLAS OF PROSTANTHERA & WESTRINGIA

For an electronic copy of a survey sheet e-mail me at janrob@fishinternet.com.au

(Continued from page 1)

majority of our 50-mm tubes (c. 2000). All plants have responded very favourably. As a result my yard is overrun and many more mints have been planted out. The Grevillea Park has now two more large areas dedicated to mints and many *Prostanthera* and *Westringia* are also interspersed amongst other plantings.

The steep bank below the chapel required much preparatory work. The area had become unworkable due the steepness of the slope and an entanglement of vines and



weeds making access dangerous. Weeds and vines were removed to allow terracing. Bush carpentry was utilised to fashion narrow walkways; created using treated pine as formwork backfilled with roadbase. With access improved, planting and mulching followed over the ensuing months. Many hands helped at various times with the project. Thanks to Ray Brown, Tony Henderson, Brian Timmis, Jan Miller, Gary Hurley and Peter Soreson for assistance. It will be interesting to see how the Mint-bushes grow in heavy subsoil clay. So far they are growing strongly in these drought conditions.

The second bed is more accessible, located in the western sector of the park adjoining the link path. It is a well-drained bed under a eucalyptus canopy. Brian Timmis assisted with planting out of this site on one of his visits. I am working on acquiring other beds to house the collection but this will require further negotiations and much preparation.

Until recently, drought conditions continued to severely impact upon our planting and re-propagating schedules. Follow-up watering of young plants in the living collection has been more than onerous. Hand-watering was required daily for up to 8hrs/day - for weeks on end both at the Grevillea Park and at home. Weeding, and other maintenance items are also very time consuming for the volunteer team.

Prioritising these jobs has left little spare time for other tasks of running the Study Group such as producing newsletters.

TALK REPORT

APS NORTH SHORE GROUP NSW

My visit to the North Shore Group on the 8 July 2005 was most enjoyable. The evening started with Jan & I deciding to have a meal at the nearby shopping mall. We anticipated eating at a restaurant but none of them said, "You Must Eat Here!" Although it was early, the lack of patronage said it all. Rather despondently we decided "fish and chips" were by far the best offer.

The establishment was well presented and slightly "upmarket". A sizable queue of patrons had formed since we had first walked past and this confirmed our choice of eateries! To our delight, the food was of high quality and included extremely fresh, large oysters. Six of which were more than a meal in themselves. We are both looking forward to a return meal.

The highlight of the evening however was putting faces to a number of study group members of which I had previously not met. Unfortunately the evening was too short and a bit hectic, and I was only able to gain a brief insight into their experience and activities. The slide show and talk placed emphasis on the *Prostanthera* species known to exist in the North Shore area but included a range of other species indigenous to the greater Sydney Region.

It was encouraging to see members eagerly taking cuttings from the *Prostanthera* and *Westringia* specimens brought in to demonstrate the diversity within the genera. Some members were also able provided valuable local knowledge on the location of *Prostanthera* species. Over many years, members of the North Shore Group have been documenting the diversity of native flora of the area. There are a number of historical collections of mint-bushes in and around Sydney Harbour and northern suburbs including type collections. These species are now extremely rare locally. In the case of *Prostanthera marifolia* probably extinct. It is hoped that my talk will inspire closer examination of the *Prostanthera* in their local bushland and result in the relocation of yet another "LOST" species.



APS MAROONDAH DISTRICT GROUP VICTORIA

The trip to Melbourne in November 2005 was jam-packed with great hospitality, garden visits, bushwalks, a end of year Christmas get together and swapping of knowledge, ideas and gardening experiences.

It started with an overnight trip on the XTP full of happy football fans on their return trip from Sydney. With the exception of my nearest co-occupants most people were considerate. With no sleep and bleary eyed I was greeted at Spencer Street by Bill Aitchison. We then went to Bill's & Sue Gyumer's residence and spent a number of hours enjoying the tranquility of their bush garden. Jan & Graeme Nicholls kindly provided a bed, nice food and hospitality.

Between Sue, Bill, Jan and Graeme I was in heaven. Kept on the move and inundated with plants or plant talk the whole time including a stimulating botanical discussion with Max McDowall. We visited local parks, beautiful gardens including Marranoa, Karrawarra, Dot and Bob O'Neill's and Suntuff Natives. Bill has kindly provided his article on our trip to the Brisbane Ranges. Other articles about the weekend will be featured in upcoming newsletters.

PROSTANTHERA & WESTRINGIA SPECIES AVAILABLE FOR CUTTING EXCHANGE

KEY FOR SYMBOLS: **WS** Wild Source **NT** Nursery Trade **E** Endangered

GENUS	SPECIES	COMMENTS
Prostanthera	askania	E, WS
	aspalathoides	NT : Red, Yellow and two tone form available soon, hopefully.
	caerulea	WS
	cineolifera	WS
	cruciflora	WS
	cuneata	NT
	densa	WS, E
	denticulata	WS : a number of clones available NT (prostrate)
	discolor	WS
	grylloana	Very limited material
	sp. aff. hirtula	WS : NSW form
	incana	WS : a number of clones available: eg. large leaved & white flowers
	incisa s. <i>str</i>	WS : limited material
	incisa var. pubescens	WS : a number of clones
	lanceolata	WS : a number of clones available
	lasianthos	WS : a number of clones available
	mellisifolia	WS, NT : a number of clones available pink, purple flws
	microphylla	Limited material
	sp. aff. mellisifolia	WS
	ovalifolia s. <i>lat.</i>	WS : a number of clones available
	phylicifolia	WS : a number of clones available

THE PROSTANTHERA & WESTRINGIA IDENTIFICATION & CUTTING EXCHANGE SERVICE

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 absorbent paper enclosed within a milk carton. Prior notice by phone is advisable before dispatch via 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.

LASIANTHOS

**Contribution to our
publication *Lasianthos* is
always welcome.**

Members can forward articles for publication electronically to my email address janrob@fishinternet.com.au or on disk. Hard copies should be preferably typed, hand written short articles are also accepted.

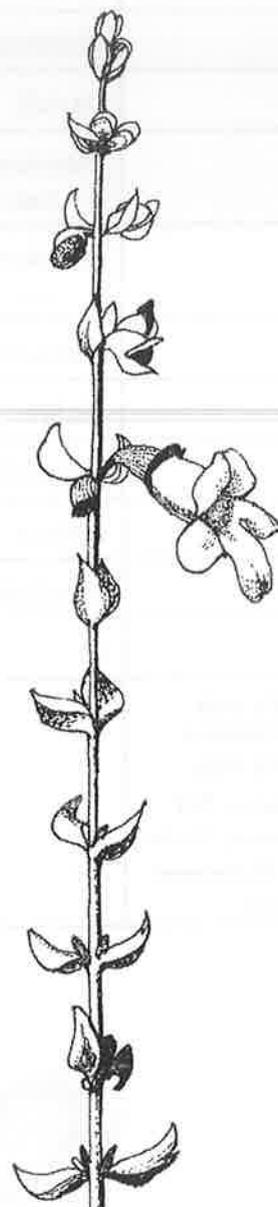
Contribute now!

**Your observations are
important!**

**PROSTANTHERA & WESTRINGIA SPECIES
AVAILABLE FOR CUTTING EXCHANGE**

KEY FOR SYMBOLS: WS Wild Source **NT** Nursery Trade **E** Endangered

GENUS	SPECIES	COMMENTS
Prostanthera	porcata	E, WS
	prunelloides	WS: a number of clones available
	rhombea	WS
	rotundifolia <i>s. lat.</i>	WS: a number of clones available
	rugosa	WS, a number of clones available
	saxicola var. montana	WS, NT: a number of clones available
	scutellarioides	WS, NT: a large number of clones available
	sieberi <i>s. lat.</i>	WS: a number of clones available
	spinosa	Very limited material
	sp. aff. spinosa	WS: NSW form of <i>P. spinosa</i>
	staurophylla	WS: a number of clones available
	striatiflora	NT
	stricta	WS: a number of clones available
	sp. aff. stricta	WS: a number of clones available
	violacea	WS: a number of clones available
	walteri	NT
	species A	WS: a number of clones available
	species B	WS
Prostanthera cultivars		
	Poorinda Ballerina	NT
	Poorinda Leane	
	Poorinda Theme	
	Badja Peak	WS
	Ragged Robin	NT

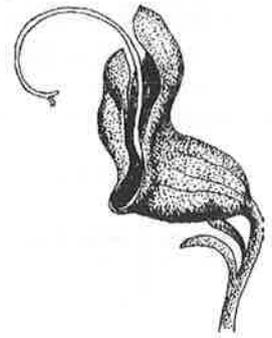


Prostanthera granitica

WESTRINGIA SPECIES AVAILABLE FOR CUTTING EXCHANGE

KEY FOR SYMBOLS: WS Wild Source **NT** Nursery Trade **E** Endangered

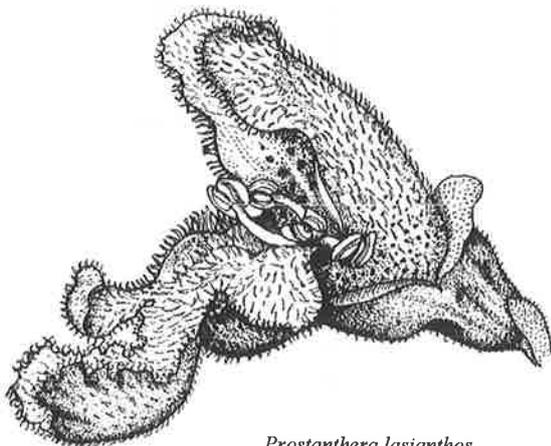
GENUS	SPECIES	COMMENTS
Westringia	amabilis	WS
	sp. aff amabilis	WS
	blakeana	WS
	davidii	WS
	eremicola var. eremicola	WS
	eremicola var. quaterna	WS
	fruticosa	WS, NT
	glabra	WS
	longifolia	WS
	sericea	WS
	sennifolia	WS
	sp.	WS
KEY FOR SYMBOLS: WS Wild Source NT Nursery Trade T Threatened taxon		



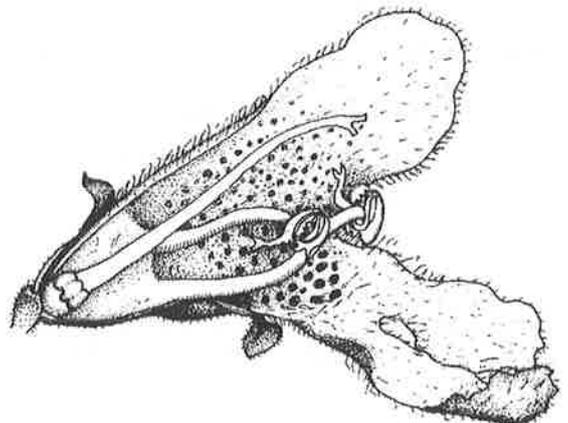
Prostanthera lasianthos



Prostanthera nivea var. *nivea*



Prostanthera lasianthos



Prostanthera lasianthos

CORRESPONDENCE

Bill Aitchison writes:

Hi Robert

Just a note to let you know that I have put in the mail to you a copy of an article on *Prostantheras* that appeared recently in Ballarat's daily paper *The Courier*. It was given to me by one of our members and I thought you might be interested (not that it says very much).

Hoping all is well with you,

Cheers

Bill

Mint-Bushes Not Found Near City

Among the more popular native plants in cultivation are the mint-bushes, many of which are notable for their attractive flowers and their aromatic foliage.

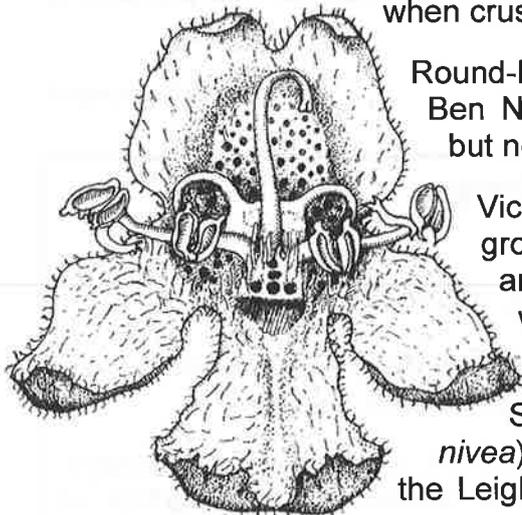
More than 100 species occur in Australia, with 19 in Victoria. It is noteworthy that none grow close to Ballarat.

Earlier this month, I notice a couple of species in the Stawell and Grampians areas. One was the Rough Mint-bush (*Prostanthera denticulata*), with rich mauve-purple flowers on small, erect, rather twiggy bushes less than a metre tall. These flowers were very prominent in the scrubby bushland, but the plants would be hardly noticeable when not in bloom.

The other mint-bush we found was in a rocky site in the Grampians. This was the two-metre tall Round-leaf Mint-bush (*P. rotundifolia*), one, of the most common mint-bushes used in cultivation. It also has attractive purple flowers.

The leaves of both species are strongly and pleasantly aromatic when crushed.

Round-leaf Mint-bush occurs at Ben Nevis, in the Mt Cole area, but not closer to Ballarat.



Prostanthera lasianthos

Victorian Christmas Bush (*P. lasianthos*) is the one in the group growing closest to Ballarat. It can reach small tree size and is found in gullies through much of the Wombat Forest, where its white flowers make a nice show in December and January.

South-east of Ballarat grows the Snowy Mint-bush (*P. nivea*), surviving in a few rather remote creekside places along the Leigh River. It is another white-flowered shrub, this time with



**SHARE YOUR
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&
STORIES**

WRITE TO

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Or email

janrob@fishinternet.com.au

BUT

for written replies please

include a stamped self

addressed envelope .

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little aroma in its narrow leaves.

In a few rocky sites in the Paddy's Ranges, just south of Maryborough, grows the Slender Mint-bush (*P. saxicola*), a small shrub with pale mauve flowers.

Mint-bushes are always on show at the Australian Plants Society's annual flower show, to be held this weekend, October 15 and 16, in the Robert Clark Centre at the Botanical Gardens.

Named specimens of wattles, grevilleas, mint-bushes and numerous other Australian plants grown in and around Ballarat are displayed, and plants, books and other items are available for purchase.



Dick Burns writes:

G'day Robert,

In Jan's Sked report on Study Groups to the ASGAP 2005 Conference, I noticed that your Study Group had a living collection of *Prostanthera* & *Westringia*. Jan stated you felt the collections from other regions are "still paltry". (I was ASGAP Secretary, and continue as Vice President for Tasmanian Region.)

We had a council meeting yesterday. Having raised your group's comment, I was of course deputised to make contact and offer what ever we can. The main reason for me doing it is that I'm coming to Sydney for all of December, leaving tonight on the Melbourne ferry, with car.

If you were interested in some Tasmanian material, I'd like to come down to Bulli & talk to you & see what you do with the plants.

Look forward to meeting you

Dick

LEADERS COMMENT: Since Dicks initial letter we have met at the Grevillea Park and Dick has continued discussions to arrange for cutting material. The Study Group thanks the Tasmanian Region for taking this great initiative. We look forward to receiving providence material to add to the collection. It is hoped that other State bodies may be in a position to also provide assistance in this regard.

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The Illawarra Grevillea Park

Web site address : <http://www.grevilleapark.org/>

2006 Open Days: July 22 & 23 July 29 & 30 September 23, 24, 30 & October 1

Rejuvenation of the *Prostanthera* collection is progressing well despite the drought. Donation of plants from various people has been much appreciated.

Working Bees: To assist in the maintenance of the Grevillea Park are held most Mondays. Volunteers are always welcome but should contact **Robert Miller on 42 846768** or **Ray Brown on 42 849216** to confirm, before attending.

Brian Timmis writes

Hi Robert

An update on the very small population of *Prostanthera* growing at Saltwater Creek between Wauchope and Telegraph Point (see *Lasianthos*1) first collected in 1992. About four years ago part of the population growing on the bank beside the road was completely demolished by someone clearing all the vegetation growing there. I was quite surprised, when revisiting the site 2 months ago, to observe a far larger population than was previously there. Approximately 20 plants in about 50 metres—now up to 600 mm tall. Be nice to think they could remain there and not be demolished once more.

Regards Brian

Steve Clemesha writes:

Bruce, a friend of mine from Mt Tambourine Qld found *Westringia rupicola* on the edge of Lamington National Park—near Binna Burra. The flowers were white. Bruce and I went for a walk around Shipstern circuit. There was a short sidetrack to a lookout & below it we could see *W. rupicola*. A second track was right beside *W. rupicola*. These plants had pale mauve flowers. Most plants were straggly because they were growing out of south facing rock face. Another interesting plant growing nearby was a prostrate *Solanum* (*Solanum aff. corifolia*). A book on the Flora of SE Qld has been put out by APS of that area, it has a photo of *Westringia rupicola* in it with darker purple flowers than the populations I have seen.

I found another Mint Bush, a *P. ovalifolia* s.lat. on the top of Mount Mitchell at Cunninghams Gap. It would get all the wind and even snow some winters. The leaves were small and almost entire. We found what is probably the same form at Ballunju Falls of the Shipstern Circuit Track. These plants were growing in a less exposed situation so had larger leaves. These also had almost entire leaf margins.

I have asked a friend at Maryborough Qld to lookout for Mint Bushes, but he has not observed any yet.

I have finally got rid of the scale from the *Prostanthera staurophylla* but now have it on the hybrid—Poorinda Theme.

Steve

Coral Hughes writes:

Dear Robert

I would like to join the Study Group. I have grown a number of *Prostantheras* over the years but time & moving house have eliminated most. I have had good success with cuttings at various times and have worked at a spot where *Prostanthera lasianthos* is grown from seed with variable success.

Koonwarra is in South Gippsland about an hour from Wilsons Promontory on the Melbourne side, so has traditionally had cool wet winters and mild summers but of course the last few years have been drier. I have now a new garden area and looking around the local nurseries of course there are few *Prostantheras* about. So I am looking for a source of cuttings or seed. I am also a member of the Correa and Daisy Study Groups. Our local *Prostantheras* are *P. lasianthos* and *P. melissifolia*. I was most surprised to see *Prostanthera striatiflora* in the McDonnell Ranges at Alice Springs and out at Newhaven Reserve—400km north west of Alice Springs

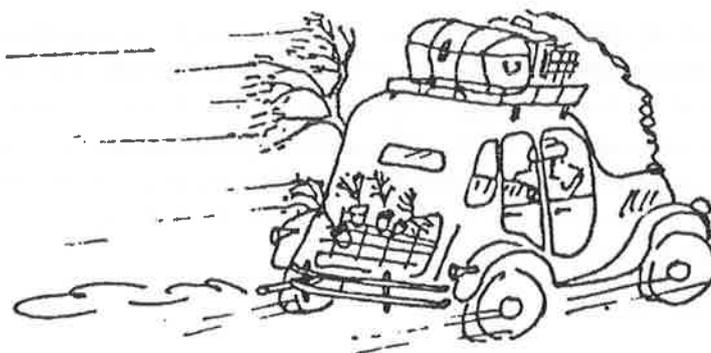
Thanking you

Coral

FIELD TRIPS

The following article is an account of a most enjoyable field trip arranged by members of APS Maroondah for my visit to Melbourne November 2005.

Text and photography are by Bill Aitchison Maroondah APS.



Field Trip to Brisbane Ranges

The visit of Robert Miller presented a perfect opportunity for a field trip to search for prostantheras. Unfortunately, Saturday 19 November clashed with a number of other events, with the result that only 5 members plus Robert took part. Participants were Graeme and Jan Nicholls, Dorothy Cash, Sue Guymer and Bill Aitchison (as well as Robert).

We had a shower as we left Melbourne but the Brisbane Ranges were perfect, with mild weather excellent for bush walking and only a gentle breeze that did not interfere with photography.



Prostanthera sp. found growing adjacent a cliff edge above Sutherland Creek, Steiglitz.

Whilst the main objective of the day was to search for prostantheras, we were also keen to find other items of interest. We were grateful to a number of people who had assisted us in planning the trip and providing species locations, including Wendy Cook (Friends of the Brisbane Ranges), Cathy Powers (APS Melton and Bacchus Marsh) and Max McDowall.

Stop 1: Flying Duck Orchid (South Steiglitz Road) - Cathy had advised us that these orchids (*Caleana major*) like to grow at the base of Eucalypt trees and in sandy soils, but we didn't need to do any searching as she had advised us the location of a colony of these orchids. The orchids completely surrounded a eucalypt, and were a highlight of the day. At

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An insect enjoys a flower of *Prostanthera nivea* var. *nivea*

this same stop, we also found another orchid, the Tiger Orchid (*Diuris sulphurea*), a quite common and widespread orchid but very attractive.

Stop 2: (Bert Boardman Recreation Area) - Not really a flower stop, but plants we found in flower were *Brunonia australis* (bigger flower heads than Robert recalls from NSW), *Goodenia geniculata*, *Acacia mitchellii*, *Pimelea humilis* and *Dillwynia sericea*.

Stop 3: *Prostanthera denticulata* (Walk along Burchell Trail from Steiglitz) - Our objective here was to find *Prostanthera denticulata*, although we had been advised it might not be easy to find. However, Robert demonstrated that it helps to understand the habitat in which mint bushes may occur, as he lead us to the top of a ridge where a cliff top area above the Sutherland Creek was covered with the plant we were looking for. It was in a very exposed situation, and a very localised population. Just an odd purple mauve flower still remained, and we could only imagine what a beautiful sight it would be when the plants were in full bloom. Other plants in flower along this walk were *Acacia mearnsii*, *Brachyscome multifida*, *Leucopogon virgatus*, *Derwentia perfoliata* and *Pelargonium rodneyanum*.

This walk was also memorable for the sound of pobblebonk frogs in the rock pools of the creek, echoing against the cliff faces on both sides of the creek. Also an echidna claimed by some members of the party who saw it as being the size of a wallaby.

Stop 4: (Lunch at Bert Boardman Recreation Area)

Stop 5: *Prostanthera nivea* (Granite Road). This stop was outside of the National Park, but it was a great roadside area with a large number of *Prostanthera nivea* in full flower. It was interesting to see here a range of butterflies, beetles and insects that seemed to be attracted to the prostantheras. Other plants in flower here were *Cassinia aculeata* and *Senecio linearifolius* (?).

Stop 6 - *Prostanthera decussata* (Reids Road). We then headed to the northern part of the Park with the objective of finding *P. decussata*, a plant that is classified as being rare in Victoria. We had thought this might be easy to find, as we had very precise location details for it. We found *Ozothamnus obcordatus*, *Platysace lanceolata*, *Olearia minor* and *Goodenia ovata* in flower. However, an hour and

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much searching later, no sign of a prostanthera. We were just about to get in our cars and leave when Robert sighted what we were looking for, only 20m from where the cars were parked. There were only about three plants, with a flower or two, but the plants were looking well worn and tired, chewed on and with no regeneration taking place. But it made the hour of searching worthwhile.

Stop 7: *Prostanthera denticulata* (Shoot Track, off Reids Road). This was only a short distance from Stop 6, and here we were looking for more *Prostanthera denticulata*. We soon found what we were looking for, a group of mint bushes looking much healthier than the ones at the previous stop. Also in flower at this stop was *Boronia anemonifolia*.

Stop 8: Suntuff Natives, Bullengarook. Our final stop for the day was at Barbara and David Pye's garden and nursery at Bullengarook - and a few more mint bushes for Robert to look at.

Although only five members joined Robert on this field trip, it was a great day enjoyed by all and also successful in that we found the prostantheras we were looking for at each stop.

Since returning to NSW, Robert has had time to think further about the plants that we saw that we understood to be *P. denticulata* and *P. decussata*. He now considers that the plants we saw are likely to be all the same taxon - whatever that may be. He is certain that none of the plants that we saw were *P. denticulata* s.str. - this species possesses terminal flowering racemes, whereas all of the plants that we saw had axillary inflorescences. The plants we saw could be *P. decussata* (which does have axillary inflorescences), although Robert notes that the type specimen for this species comes from the McAllister Range, and he can't be sure that what we saw are the same as the type specimen (which he has not seen).

Note: Parts of the Brisbane Ranges are affected by phytophthora. During our field trip, we tried to avoid spreading it by following the regime adopted by the Friends of Brisbane Ranges. They try to avoid spreading it by keeping away from healthy grass trees, especially after being in an infected area. After any trip in the bush, before they get in their cars, they use a stiff brush to remove all dirt from their boots, then spray them with 70% methylated spirits (diluted with water). The metho kills the phytophthora spores. This can also be done during a walk, if moving from an infected area to an uninfected one.

LEADERS COMMENT:

The issue of spread of pathogens raised by Bill should be taken very seriously by all study group members.

We all know that *Prostanthera* can drop dead at the drop of a hat! Quite often this is due to a pathogenic fungus like phytophthora! I have been endeavouring to have pathogen spread recognised as a threatening process which would need to be taken into account in an environmental impact assessment in relation to rare or threatened *Prostanthera*

Our gardens are potentially huge vector sources for the spread of these damaging organisms! We all have a self-interest in not translocating phytophthora especially to or from our own gardens!

Wish to book a talk on *Prostanthera* and *Westringia*?

Groups can email me at janrob@fishinternet.com.au to arrange a suitable date.