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JANUARY 1984

PROSTANTHERA STUDY GROUP

NEWSLETTER NO. 6

PATRON

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LEADER

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As you may know Les Taylor has resigned as leader of the group. He started the group originally and has helped many members, like myself, to become interested in Prostanthera. Les has indicated he is willing to assist anyone who wishes to write to him at 4 Prospect St., Blacktown 2148.

I have accepted the position as leader and am now presenting my first newsletter. Although I am not an expert, I expect us, as a group of active members, to provide helpful and reliable information in future newsletters. Please keep me up to date with news about Prostanthera species, particularly ones growing well for you, ones you find hard to grow and those new ones you have collected recently.

MEETING OF GROUP MEMBERS

SEPTEMBER 1984

Burrendong Arboretum, near Wellington, N.S.W. will be the venue for our first group meeting. I would like any members who are able to attend a weekend at Burrendong to let me know as soon as possible. Burrendong already has a large collection of Prostanthera; hopefully many will be flower and of interest to members. In a later newsletter I hope to provide a list of mints and how they are growing under what I believe to be ideal conditions. Hopefully we could cover subjects including, cutting and grafting techniques. No doubt there will be some planting and weeding to do.

PROSTANTHERA densa

Some members are now growing this rare, but interesting, plant. A member from Toronto, N.S.W., Kevin Stokes, has for some years now been growing Prostanthera densa. He has successfully grown a large plant, flowering well, in a 30 cm. tub; also has many other plants coming on. Look for Kevin's article in the next newsletter. A great breakthrough for P. densa, once thought to be extinct in the Cronulla area (south of Sydney) is that it has been re-discovered in Cronulla. An area of extremely beautiful plants was found by Robert Miller, an employee at Sylvan Grove Native Garden, Bankstown.

SYDNEY WILDFLOWER EXHIBITION

CASTLE HILL SHOWGROUND, OCTOBER 13TH-14TH, 1984

The Prostanthera Study Group has already been asked and has indicated a Prostanthera display will be exhibited. This date will be a month later than past exhibitions and should be ideal, as more mints should be in flower. Any members who are growing suitable plants in containers or will have available cut flowers for this show, please let me know before next newsletter, as I will have more information by then.

PROSTANTHERA aspalathoides

One of our new members, Kiat Low, is very interested in studying this mint and has several forms. He would like members growing this plant to send cuttings, particularly those of known origin. Is any one growing a white form?

Cuttings can be sent to my present address 102 Lugarno Pde., Lugarno 2210 and I will pass them on to Kiat.

CONTAINER PLANTS

I have been growing Prostanthera species in containers for 2 or 3 years and present indications show some of them performing very well. Several are in 30 cm. (12") pots, but most are in 20 cm. These would probably all prefer the larger pot but lack of space prohibits this. These plants are in a semi-s hade area, facing west. At this time of the year, during early afternoon, they receive full sun and all decide to have a little wilt, however look better later in the evening after watering. *P. caerulea* (60 cm. tall) concerned me as there had been virtually no top growth during the past 15 months. It was suggested to me that I examine the root ball for possible nematode attack. The lower half of the soil contained no roots at all and exposed roots in the top half appeared to have nematodes. I applied granular "Nemacur", watered it in and now believe my plant looks much better with some new growth.

GRAFTING

It seems Prostanthera species have a reputation of being hard to keep going in our garden situations. My first Prostanthera was planted in 1977 and is still growing well. Several other *P.* species are looking good but many have died.

Grafting may be the answer to establishing hard to grow mints. I feel it is too early to claim any success with my grafts but the following look promising. *P. sieberi*, *P. incana*; *P. rotundifolia* (pink), *P. caerulea*; *P. cruciflora*; *P. prunelloides* and *P. magnifica*. Using a top wedge graft and either *Westringea fruticosa* or *W. brevifolia* as root stock. Any members who have been grafting with success please let me have a report for the next newsletter.

CUTTINGS

Members wishing to participate in a cutting exchange, please forward me a list available or cuttings you would like. Subject to the response I receive, I can organise this and provide a list in future newsletters. I would also like members to forward information showing exact locations of mints growing in the wild. Necessary information is - flowering time, habit, number of plants (approx.) colour and leaf shape or any other point of interest, etc.

During the Christmas and New Year period Prostanthera lasianthos was seen flowering beautifully adjacent to the highway at the top of Bulli Pass, N.S.W. one plant probably 5 m. high. There was also a magnificent display of *Ceratopetalum apetalum*, unfortunately only to be viewed while driving on this narrow section of road.

Membership fees are now due for 1984.

Brian Jenner

CUTTING EXCHANGE

LIST NO. 1

JANUARY 1984

Available to financial members only.

Send cost of postage and packing to me by return mail. Amount will be enclosed with cutting material.

Quantities and availability will depend on demand, as in some cases, not a lot of material is yet available.

Allow for some delay due to suitable material sometimes not being actually ready to be taken as cuttings.

Cuttings will be sent on Mondays by PRIORITY PAID thus avoiding any hold-ups.

A brief description for those not familiar with plants. As many *Prostanthera* species differ in form, some indication from description may be useful for people collecting selective forms.

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|-----|---|-----------------|--|
| 1. | <i>P. aspalothoides</i> | 0.7 x 0.7 | red flowers, strongly aromatic, linear leaves to 6 mm |
| 2. | <i>aspalothoides</i> | | yellow flowers, as above |
| 3. | <i>cruciflora</i> | to 2 m x 1 m | white/cream flowers (cross-like) leaves oblicular grey-green. |
| 4. | <i>cryptandroides</i> | 1m x 1 m | mauve flowers leaves narrow to 8 mm. |
| 5. | <i>densa</i> | 1m x 0.6 | mauve flowers, leaves deltoid light green. |
| 6. | <i>discolor</i> | 1.5-2m x 1m | mauve flowers, narrow leaves 12 mm x 1mm can be spectacular in flower |
| 7. | <i>incana</i> | 1.5 x 1.5 | mauve flowers, leaves ovate to 10 mm revolute margins |
| 8. | <i>incana</i> | 1m. x 1 m. | white flowers, leaves as above, probably Gosford form |
| 9. | <i>lasianthos</i> | to 5 m. | white flowers several different forms including species growing south of Sydney |
| 10. | <i>ovalifolia</i> | 2-4 m. x 2m. | purple flowers |
| 11. | <i>marifolia</i> | 1m x 1 m | mauve flowers, leaves similar to <i>p. incana</i> white. |
| 12. | <i>nivea</i> | to 3 m. x 1 m. | white flowers, leaves narrow light green |
| 13. | <i>ovalifolia</i> var. <i>latifolia</i> | 2-3 m. | large ovate serrated leaf |
| 14. | <i>ovalifolia</i> | "Violet Beauty" | foliage darkens when flowering |
| 15. | <i>phylicifolia</i> | to 1m. x 1m. | mauve flowers, narrow dark green leaves |
| 16. | <i>melissifolia</i> | 2 m. x 3 m. | pink flowers, aromatic crinkly leaves |
| 17. | <i>rhombea</i> | 1 m. x 1.5 | mauve flowers aromatic dark leaves round revolute margins |
| 18. | <i>rhombea</i> | | pink flowers, not aromatic leaves, light green round more open plant needs pruning |

Cutting Exchange List No. 1 cont.

- 19. rotundifolia several forms including pink flowering small leaf form.
- 20. saxicola var. montana to 0.4 m. white flowers.
- 21. sieberi 2 m. x 2 m. mauve flowers, strongly aromatic, ovate toothed leaves
- 22. spinosa 0.5 x 1 m. lavender flowers, leaves ovate to 8 mm light green
- 23. striatiflora 1-2m x 1 m. cream flowers, light green lanceolate leaves
- teretifolia 1-2 m x 1 m purple flowers, leaves grey-green to 15 mm x 1 mm

There has been a few requests for seeds. Anyone able to collect seed could they forward them to me.