

PROSTANTHERA STUDY GROUP

NEWSLETTER NO. 8

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At last, a very late newsletter! The past several months for me have seen a move from Lugarno to establishing myself at Caringbah. Along with a sizable building alteration to our house, my wife Joy and I have begun to establish a native garden. Non-native trees and shrubs and a swimming pool were removed. The front garden, facing south, is at present only partly completed, still a lot of lawn left but eventually most of it will be removed. The previous owner left us with a landscaped garden that included asparagus fern and azaleas, mulched with large chunks of pine bark, and finished with treated pine log pieces wired together to form a garden edge. A conventional row of shrubs planted in pre-cast concrete circles were also removed. Established trees left in the front garden are - *Ceratopetalum gummiferum*, *Brachychiton populneum*, *Angophora costata*, *Eucalyptus* sp., *Callistemon "Kings Park"*, *Grevillea "Ned Kelly"* and a *Pittosporum*. In the open aspect of the front garden, a mass planting in a wide range of native plants is starting to look interesting. The shaded part of the garden is now mass planted with *Prostanthera*, using tall growing species as a background and smaller species to the front. So far, plantings include *P. ovalifolia*, *P. lasianthos*, *P. phyllicifolia*, *P. melissifolia*, *P. cuneata*, *P. rhombea*, *P. discolor*, *P. rotundifolia*, *P. sieberi*, *P. incisa*, *P. incana* and *P. teretifolia*. *Chorizema cordatum* has been used with the *Prostanthera* for a display in spring. We have almost completely re-developed the back garden. Well established trees are *Eucalyptus* sp. (2), *Callistemon salignus* and a Lilly Pilly. Using trucks loads of filling and 100 old railway sleepers to create the various garden beds, of which some consist of a soil mix and others use river sand up to 40 cm. deep. We have again planted with a large variety of natives. This time using an occasional *Prostanthera*. The area near and under the Lilly Pilly seemed ideal for planting Mints and in addition, a number of grafted plants are growing with no problems, as yet. A 10 m. long propagating igloo is also now complete, and this incidentally will be used mainly for propagating *Prostanthera*.

GRAFTING

I would like members who have tried grafting *Prostanthera* either successfully or otherwise to write of their experiences, as I am presently preparing a "grafting" article for the next newsletter. Bob Tomkins of Canberra has given an interesting article on grafting that will be included, also.

SYDNEY WILDFLOWER EXHIBITION 1984

At this flower show, the *Prostanthera* Study Group Display was out of doors among other displays. It was good considering the best flowering time seemed to be finished. Floralands Nursery loaned plants including *P. magnifica*, and Les Taylor had a few plants, but the bulk of the display was brought and set up by Robert Miller and myself. Cut flowers brought by other members added to the display. Robert was kept busy most of the weekend at our display or at Plant Sales, where he was keen to sell Mint bushes. He was also responsible in adding 10 new members to the Group. Thanks Robert. The date for the 1985 Show has been advised (September 28th and 29th) and we need members to help set up. Now is a good time to start preparing display plants. Container plants can be cut back, this helps them thicken up and have less stalk especially if they are for display.

SEEDS

As yet there has been no offers of seed. Although there is not much in demand here, there has been a few overseas inquiries.

MEMBERS PLANT LIST UPDATE

A complete list will be advised in a future Newsletter and a cutting exchange made from this collection. I would like an update of Prostanthera at present being grown by members. Because of unreliable labeling of plants often brought at nurseries, some of this incorrect naming is quite amazing. One example was labelled *P. incana* and actually was a pink form of *P. ovalifolia*. Another labelled *P. "Poorinda Parvane"* was a *Westringia* hybrid. Members have sent me cuttings with names also incorrect. These often include the persons name who provided them with the plant, indicating to me, the incorrect plant name is also being passed on. In an effort to have our plants correctly named, I have included a form for members to fill in and return to me. I would like members to send me specimens of plants they cannot positively and exactly identify. Give plants the correct name, also specimen of the more common Prostanthera i.e. *P. incana*, *P. ovalifolia*, *P. rotundifolia*, *P. lasianthos* etc. This will be of help to those members who grow more than one form of a species. Some species can be identified from a reasonable cutting even without the flower (please advise colour), however some will need more expert identification and these will be treated accordingly.

Towards the end of the year, a more interesting range of Prostanthera will be available to all members. Robert Miller has been very successful on his field trips and has collected several Prostanthera not previously (to my knowledge) grown or seldom grown in cultivation. On this point, as Robert is so keen and also lacking funds, I would ask anyone who may have any suggestions which might enable Robert to overcome this problem.

STUDY GROUP MEETING

Burrendong Arboretum meeting was a non-event. I was unable to attend as my move to Caringbah coincided at this time. Robert, our only attending member, joined the East Hills S.G.A.P. Group visit there. Other intending study group members were advised of the cancellation.

This spring, I would like to arrange a meeting at the Bankstown "Sylvan Grove" Native Garden. The Prostanthera flowering there last spring were brilliant. I will advise exact date later for this meeting, and look forward to this. Robert will be our guide on this occasion. Members interested - please advise me. Meeting will continue at my garden.

AUGUST 1984 PROSTANTHERA HUNTING IN N.S.W. by Robert Miller

The primary aim of this article is to inspire more members to actively participate in the revision of the Genus Prostanthera.

Whilst in Northern New South Wales, my wife and I attempted to locate a number of Prostanthera sp. in the Tenterfield area. Location details were obtained from material held at the University of New England.

Prostanthera caerulea : 4 mls from Boonoo Boonoo Falls N.S.W. along falls road.
Tall shrub (6ft) beside water course 19/1/65

Carells Creek 17½ miles north of Tenterfield

Bald Rock north of Tenterfield

Granite soil, low forest 6-12' tall white flowers 11.11.1970
2 miles S.E. of Torrington on Road to Stannum - white
corolla form.

Leaving Tenterfield anxious and full of optimism, we headed north through white fields and banks of fog to Boonoo Boonoo Falls. At the falls we found two leaf forms of *P. nivea*. These can be observed by following the track marked top swimming hole to the pool. *P. nivea* grows in the crevices and the shallow soil of the 2nd large granite outcrop upstream.

One specimen was observed in flower. It has a white corolla with no markings in the throat; thick succulent, almost terete leaves which are channelled above, 0.5-2cm long dark green with small internode spacing. This form is not common in the area.

The 2nd form is most common and at the time of visitation not in flower; cutting material collected has since flowered. The corolla pure white, no markings in throat, leaves 2-5 cm in length, flat and thin in texture, grey green, internode spacing up to 4-5 cm.

Heading back along the falls road we searched in vain, most of the side creeks and the main river for *P. caerulea*. Its apparent absence I feel may be due to habitat destruction and grazing cattle since 1965. Further and more detailed attempts at relocating these specimens should be undertaken. Who will be responsible for this job?

P. caerulea (New England Uni.) or *P. prunelloides* (Qld. Herb) is alive and well in Girraween National Park Qld. between Bald Rock and South Bald Rock on the Border trail. I did not have time to see the plant in situ, however I was able to look at recent photos of this beautiful plant; terminal racemes, pure white corolla with no markings or striations in the throat, entire leaves, ovate to oblique.

This plant differs in all respects from *P. caerulea* in the Blue Mountains, at Mt. Tormah and Mt. Wilson.

Other species of *Prostanthera* found in Girraween National Park are *P. nivea* var. *nivea* amongst granite boulders, *P. saxicola* found at the Northern end of Baboon Gully Watershed. Flwr. appear white in dried specimens. *P. phyllicifolia* on the eastern track. Another plant labelled *P. phyllicifolia* creek banks Mt. Norman is very similar to *P. scutellarioides* i.e. flower violet-purple, axillary same shape size, however the calyx is not retuse and leaves are not acute but more obtuse. I feel that this plant is a form of *P. scutellarioides*. I have observed this species change leaf and calyx features over its range in N.S.W.

Members who are interested at observing *Prostanthera* in this area should seek the aid of the friendly and helpful staff of the park, who will be able to give more detailed information. Most species require $\frac{1}{2}$ day to full day to be observed.

Arriving at Torrington in the late afternoon, hopeful of finding the white flowering form of *P. teretifolia*, I was soon made very aware of the inadequacy of information given with herbarium specimens. What I thought would be a relatively easy task (to find this pop of *P. teretifolia*) soon became an incredibly frustrating and depressing piece of work. The location information given is 2 km S.E. of Torrington on the Road to Stanum. This information seems quite adequate, but! was it growing on the right or left hand side of the road, 5 metres or 500 m. from the road, amongst granite boulders? under the canopy? on a hill? Where was the 2 km. measured from? was it a rough guess? Information should be precise and sufficiently detailed to allow easy recollection or observation.

I had time only for 2 attempts at finding this plant. The first 2 km being measured from the P.O. and the 2nd from the Town sign. In both instances an area of about 500-800 m. radius was searched on both sides of the road to no avail. The area has been heavily grazed presumably by sheep and if these areas contained the plant it is most definitely extinct.

Another area visited was Whian Whian State Forest which lies on the southern flank of the Old Tweed Volcano about 25 km. north of Lismore. This is a beautiful area having diverse flora due to rich soil, high rainfall and varying topography.

At Minyon Falls under a canopy of *Eucalyptus haemastoma* and *E. pilularis* grows *Prostanthera scutellarioides*, *P. ovalifolia* and *Westringia blakelyara*?

Prostanthera scutellarioides is confined to the creek above the falls directly below the second and third car parks. It grows either amongst the moss and in the cracks of the rhyolitic bedrock or in the shallow moist soil in a narrow belt on the northern side of the creek. *Prostanthera scutellarioides* here is a decumbant shrub of two to three feet, compact and spreading. Leaves acute, linear to 3 cm long, 3 - 4 mm wide, dark green above, pale beneath. Margins entire recurved, shortly petiolate. Calyx lower lip very obtuse -retuse slightly shorter than upper. Upper lip acute 5 mm long 3mm wide striate. Cordla purple 12-15 mm long glabrous, flowers solitary in leaf axils. Bracteoles 4 mm long 0.3 mm wide.

Prostanthera ovalifolia grows amongst P. scutellarioides and along the creek. However it is the dominant collinizer along the roadside and in many areas after logging has been carried out. Within Whian Whian State Forest, the few specimens observed in flower had deep purple calyxes, pale mauve flowers with cream stamens. The tallest specimens observed grew on the southern side of the creek and were approx. 10 - 13 ft.

FEES Annual fees \$2 now due.

CUTTING EXCHANGE

LIST NO. 2

APRIL 1985

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.

1. *cruciflora* to 2 m x 1 m white/cream flowers (cross-like) leaves oblicular grey-green
2. *densa* 1m x 0.6 mauve flowers, leaves deltoid light green
3. *discolor* 1.5-2m x 1 m mauve flowers, narrow leaves 12 mm x 1 mm can be spectacular in flower
4. *incana* 1.5 x 1.5 m mauve flowers, leaves ovate to 10 mm revolute margins
5. *laxianthos* to 5 m. white flowers several different forms including species growing south of Sydney
6. *ovalifolia* 2-4 m. x 2m. purple flowers
7. *marifolia* 1 m x 1 m mauve flowers, leaves similar to *p. incana* white
8. *ovalifolia* 4 m. x 1 m. Gosford form
9. *ovalifolia* var. *latifolia* 2 - 3 m. large ovate serrated leaf
10. *ovalifolia* "Violet Beauty" foliage darkens when flowering
11. *phylicifolia* to 1 m. x 1m mauve flowers, narrow dark green leaves
12. *melissifolia* 2 m. x 3 m. pink flowers, aromatic crinkly leaves
13. *rhombea* 1 m. x 1.5 m. mauve flowers aromatic dark leaves round revolute margins
14. *rhombea* pink flowers, not aromatic leaves, light green round more open plant needs pruning.
15. *rotundifolia* several forms including pink flowering small leaf form
16. *sieberi* 2 m. x 2 m. mauve flowers, strongly aromatic, ovate toothed leaves
17. *striatiflora* 1-2m x 1 m. cream flowers, light green lanceolate leaves
18. *teretifolia* 1-2 m x 1 m. purple flowers, leaves grey-green to 15 mm x 1 mm
19. *walter* 1 x 1.5 m (alpine mint bush) dark green foliage
20. *linearis* 1-3 x .5 m flowers white, narrow leaves
21. *cuneata* prostrate white flowers small dark green leaves
22. *nivea* var. *induta* flowers pale blue, grey/green foliage

Cutting Exchange List No. 2 continued

- 23. Magnifica 1-2 m x .5 m large flowers and calyx - limited material
- 24. violacea 1-2 x 1.0 m mauve flowers, small round leaves
- 25. saxicola prostrate white flowers - collected Boyd Plateau N.S.W.

I acknowledge there are a few outstanding orders for cuttings either late in last year or very current. Please advise regarding same.

