

ISSN 1838-9082



NEWSLETTER

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Welcome
to our new members
 Narelle Barden
 Peter Shelton

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Actinotus gibbonsii
 Image: www.rymich.com

Attached with this newsletter is a pdf.
**Effect of slow release fertiliser on the growth
 of containerised flannel flower.**

**The Waratah and Flannel Flower Study Group is affiliated with the
 Australian Native Plants Society (Australia) - ANPSA**
Newsletters are sent out in May and November (electronic only).
Membership is restricted to individuals (including partners) and not groups.
Membership \$5.00 per year to be paid by cheque or Direct Debit upon receipt of invoice.
There is no deadline for newsletter contributions - send them anytime, sooner rather than later.

Maria writes:

It's been a very busy second half of the year for me. I co-ordinated the NSW Get-Together weekend with a small local committee and from the response we had it was an outstanding success. We had 130 people from all over the state attend our program of garden visits, dinners and tours. The only downside was the very dry year and early spring which saw a short early springburst of mintbushes and waratahs and then they were gone. Normally my garden is ablaze with purple and red during October but it was not to be.

After the Get-Together was over we all collapsed for a week. I then had to tackle our e-tax. Because I run a nursery I usually submit a business and professional items schedule. These have to be done online now. This is also the first year that Mac users have been able to submit online returns and it took a while to get my head around the whole process. I was definitely suffering from technology stress syndrome. The amazing part is the pre-fill option which automatically enters your bank interest and dividends for you. Ah! Big Brother is definitely here.

The storms have brought a bit of rain but I still have a big backlog of planting to do. This year I spent a lot of time mulching and I think I'll just keep covering the garden in

as much mulch as I can from now on. Hopefully the summer will be wet. We have a big deficit to make up if we want to reach our annual average rainfall. The big fires in the Blue Mountains and elsewhere which were a result of the dry and unseasonably warm conditions probably went through some of our waratah and flannel flower habitats. This will mean a good *Telopea* flowering in two years time and we may have *A. forsythii* emerge in places. I do hope that we don't have any more devastation like we saw in Winmalee. My heart goes out to those who lost everything.

The dry year put a lot of stress on my waratahs and I had problems trying to control a palm scale infestation. I used Eco-oil and Confidor but they didn't solve the problem. I'm now using a 10 day program of Anti-Scale at a slightly stronger solution than is recommended. It seems to be doing the trick but I'll have to keep a really close eye on my plants to make sure that all the scale is cleared away. The scale affected some of the flowers which were distorted and had to be cut off early. That's OK for me as I'm not a flower producer. Spare a thought for Brian Fitzpatrick who lost 80% of his flowers to a late -6C frost. I suppose farmers in Australia have had to put up with the vagaries of the weather for over 200 years now. You have to be philosophical.

Seedbank

I would like to start a seedbank for members of both *Telopea* and *Actinotus* seed. *Telopea* seed is often very difficult to obtain so it would be great if members were able to contribute seed. It is usually harvested in late April to May. Seeds need to be labelled with the name of collector, species or hybrid name and date of collection. I would then make it free to WFFSG members (you would need to pay for postage) and sell it at a nominal price to others. I'd love your thoughts about this. Seeds of *Telopea* hybrids in the garden sometimes throw up a whole new variety so it would be good to experiment.

Actinotus seed can be collected all through the warmer months and should be sent immediately. It needs to be as fresh as possible for successful germination and I would let members know by email when it becomes available. I have three varieties of fresh seed available now. Just email your request.

From the members

Phil Trickett & Catriona Bate (Milton NSW) write:



Here is a photo of our *Telopea speciosissima x oreades* in full bloom right now. What a feature plant. It has around 30 blooms this year, its second year of flowering. Our *T. mongaensis* is about to flower as is our *T. 'Braidwood Brilliant'*. Conditions here seem to suit the waratahs.

Frank Allatt writes:

Scale has been a problem this year and is still a problem. September/October is the time to prune waratahs and a good opportunity to prune out any heavily infested stems and take off any leaves on other stems that are heavily infested. The plant should then be sprayed using a product such as Eco Oil or Anti scale and the spray process repeated every 2 weeks until there is no indication of any live scale. The plant should continue to be observed and infested leaves removed or the plant sprayed. One scale or the occasional scale on

a leaf/stem can be physically removed using a fingernail and once removed from the host will quickly die. Antiscale can be used at a slightly higher strength than recommended, but because it has a petroleum oil as a constituent, the spray should not be applied during high temperatures. The other ingredient is Maldison and its continued use can harm beneficials. Scale is endemic, so is likely to occur when conditions are right – seemingly at any time of the year. So one has to be constantly vigilant and try to manage it preferably without the use of harsh chemicals.

Margaret Sleigh writes:

We are all excited as it looks like we do have buds on our Waratah Flowers. They all have these little buds on them but some are larger and pinkish looking. These two are both Shady Lady Reds. The second is definitely bigger than the first and actually has another tiny bud next to the largest one. We are very happy here because our grass trees have developed flower spikes. We are looking forward to seeing the flowers as I have never actually seen the flowers before. If we are successful with our Waratahs it will be because of your excellent advice.



Ed: Aren't you nice! If these are flower buds and not leaf buds then you will have autumn flowers. However, don't hold your breath. Waratah flower buds usually start in autumn for a spring flowering. Sorry to be a little pessimistic but I suspect these to be leaf buds. However you should know in a short time. If they haven't opened up within a few weeks then Hooray! you will have some autumn flowers.

Growing Waratahs from seed

I've been after *Teloepa oreades* (Gippsland Waratah) seed for some time so was happy when I found a seller on eBay. The company has a website and they sell an amazing variety of native plant and exotic seeds.

www.australianseed.com

Curiously their instructions on the packet read:

Soak seed overnight, sow depth of seed. Keep warm and moist but not waterlogged. Germination 10 - 35 days @ 18 C- 22 C.

I've never soaked *Teloepa* seed before but I do water with smoke water when sowing. I might do a trial where I have one punnet soaked and another not. This year I managed to get hold of some *T. aspera* seed and I germinated this on my kitchen windowsill where it's warm and sheltered.

A second company (not identified) was also selling *T. oreades* seed on eBay so I bought a packet. The sheet that came with the seed was also interesting. These hints seem to be taken from a few different sources but the sources aren't identified. They vary in usefulness and authenticity.

Growing Tips1:

General friable soil with good texture. Rich leaf compost or similar material is beneficial. Good drainage if possible to a depth of 45 cm. A raised bed or mound can improve drainage. New soil should be mixed with existing. Supplementary watering may be needed in dry or hot spells as soil should not dry out completely. Semi-shaded position or at least shelter from hot afternoon sun. Mulch to 5-6 cms to keep soil moist and surface roots cool. Cut for flowers or prune stems to about half after flowering.

Growing tips 2:

Approximately 70% sunshine and 30% shade either on a daily basis or throughout the day so select a spot

which provides the shade requirements under a large eucalypt or acacia. Between 250ml and 350 ml or natural rain or watering each year. At least 60cm of quickly draining soil beneath the roots. A 135 cm diameter concrete pipe 75cm in length is a way to achieve this. Three plants could be put in one pipe. Shelter from the hardest frosts (although plants withstood a -12C frost in 1994. Some mulch added when the initial planting is done. If using a pipe fill with a mixture of 25% river sand and 75% garden soil. Add in about 40 kgs of well-composted mulch. This member uses bush mulch from his property. The soil should have neutral pH. The best planting time is the first two weeks of Autumn. Mulch around the newly planted plants with 5 cm of mulch. keep that mulch at least 10 cm away from the trunk of each plant. There is a small black beetle which turns up in some gardens that breeds in the mulch and will chew the bark of waratahs.

Ed: 3 plants within a 135cm diameter pipe seems to be overcrowding to me. Any comments?

Prune based on a three year cycle. When flowers are fully open cut them from the bush. Take two thirds of the new woody growth with the flower (this is easily worked out by the colour changes in the bark). Most of the cut off points will shoot away with new growth (next year's flowers) but about a third won't shoot. These cuts will shoot in the next two years.

Feed just at the end of winter when the established flower buds begin to show signs of opening and after flowering with half a cup of Yates Camellia food sprinkled on top of the mulch around each plant in the drip circle but not close to the roots.

Ed: Camellia food! That's a new one. Am doing a trial with some potted waratahs - half are being fertilised with camellia food and the other half with blood and bone. It also sounds like waratahs and camellias might share the same conditions and could be grown together. That could be a good selling point for gardeners in cool climate areas who grow a lot of camellias.

Growing tips 3:

Prefers a poor stony soil. Requires a lime free soil. Required a sunny position in a well-drained soil that is low in phosphates. Requires a lot of summer heat, abundant moisture in the growing season and a dry spell when dormant.

Growing Tips 4: Some English notes

Only succeeds outdoors in the milder areas of Britain, requiring greenhouse protection in most parts of the country. The plant is hardy to at least -7C in Australian gardens but this cannot be translated directly to British gardens due to cooler summers and longer colder and wetter winters. Plants have been known to tolerate temperatures down to -5C in Britain, occasionally lower when in a very good position.

Propagation from seed:

Sow in spring in a warm greenhouse. When they are large enough to handle prick the seedlings out into individual pots and grow them on in the greenhouse for at least their first winter. Plant them out into their permanent positions in late spring or early summer after the last expected frosts.

Ed: There you have it - confused information depending on the source.

Red Waratahs anyone?**Margery Street** writes:

I purchased a number of waratahs in bloom for a talk and was surprised to see a red substance coming off on my hands and shirt.

Is this normal for waratahs? I don't remember it happening the last time I bought them. My greengrocer presumably sourced them from the Sydney flower market.

The red substance seems to rinse off but I don't know what to say to the participants who will be handling and dissecting them during the workshop!

Ed: I've seen dyed Banksias in supermarkets. Could this be a new trend?

Postscript: The red 'dye' turned out to be pollen!

Telopea 'Corroboree'**Tom and Pip Gibian** write:

This is an old *T. mongaensis x speciosissima* hybrid. We are growing it at Gloucester in full sun, and it has been very successful. The flower is somewhat smaller than *T. speciosissima* but a very good deep crimson/red. Our biggest bush is way over 2m when in flower, and has been covered in flowers for 2 years now. We didn't count but it would have been 30-40 flowers this year. The flowers were a little smaller than last year, possibly because of the drought, we thought. We prune it heavily after flowering. We also sell flannel flowers. They are cutting-grown, with stock plants from a few different sources.



Telopea flower with three crowns

Lindy Harris writes:

I have attached a photograph of a flower-head picked from a nameless *Telopea* that we have here. You've probably seen this before, although I haven't, but thought it worth sending just in case it *is* unusual. While most of the flower heads are normal, the image shows the flower head with three 'crowns'. We found one other flower on this plant with two crowns. I've seen cauliform flowering but not this. Plant is healthy. Weird.

Actinotus gibbonsii F.Muell.

Dwarf Flannel Flower, Gibbons Flannel Flower
Syn: *Actinotus gibbonsii* var. *baeuerlenii* Maiden & Betche

The dwarf Flannel Flower is a small annual with flowering stems reaching 30cm in height. The dissected 2-3 lobed leaves are divided twice and can grow up to 15mm long on stems ranging from 4.5mm - 22mm in length. The pinkish flowering heads range from 3mm - 8mm in diameter with 7 - 9 short narrow lanceolate almost inconspicuous green hairy bracts that are joined at the base. The tiny black hairy seeds are about 2mm in length.



Actinotus gibbonsii plant parts

Image: <http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au>

Flowering occurs throughout the warmer months from late spring to autumn. The Dwarf Flannel Flower is quite widespread occurring on the North, Central and South Coasts, the Northern, Central and Southern Tablelands, the North-west and Central-west Slopes and the North-west and South-west Plains where it grows in eucalypt woodland and shrubby heathland in sandy (often red) soils, north from Bombala in NSW and spreading into Qld. Because of its size it is fairly inconspicuous.

Like other flannel flowers, the species survives fire in the soil stored as seed. It is not listed on the EPBC list of rare and endangered plants.

There is no information on the web of whether anyone has tried to germinate the seed or grow it from cuttings.

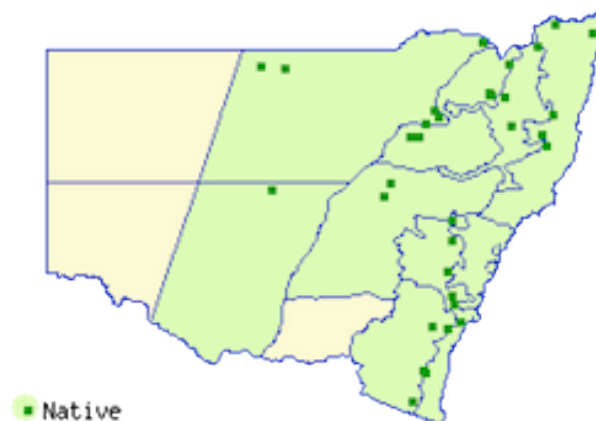


Image: <http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au>



Leaves and flower heads of *A. gibbonsii*

Image: www.anbg.gov.au

The University of Sydney's EBOT Plant sciences Collection has it listed as not cultivated. Their specimen came from the Boyd River in Kanangra-Boyd National Park where it was found growing in low open heath on a granite rocky outcrop among *Kunzea*, *Baeckea* and *Leptospermum* species. Occurrence was rare.

References:

<http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfl&lvl=sp&name=Actinotus-gibbonsii>

<http://ebot.library.usyd.edu.au/view?docId=ebot/records/2021.xml;query=;brand=default>

<http://www.landmanager.org.au/fire-responses-actinotus-gibbonsii>

***Telopea oreades* F. Muell**

Gippsland Waratah

oreades: (Greek) of or from the mountains.

This is another of the shrubby forms of waratah with open flower heads similar to *T. mongaensis* and *T. truncata*. It occurs naturally in temperate rainforest or wet sclerophyll forest on moist coastal ranges and tableland escarpments; south from Monga valley near Braidwood and across the border into the Gippsland region of Victoria. In ideal conditions it can grow up to 12 m high but is usually much smaller than that.

Image: <http://plantnet.rbg Syd.nsw.gov.au>

The papery leaves are long, narrow and obovate ranging from 11–28 cm long, and 5–6 cm wide with a pointed tip, entire margins and an obscure network of veins on the upper surface, but which can be easily seen underneath.

The deep red terminal open flower heads have up to 60 small flowers opening from the top of the head first in early summer. The pink or green bracts which surround the flower heads are mostly 1.5–7.5 cm long. After flowering plants produce several large woody follicles up to 7 cm long and which contain a row of winged seeds. In the wild several variations in flower colour have been observed ranging from deep red through to a white form on Errinundra Plateau. In the vicinity of Monga, *T. oreades* occurs in association with *T. mongaensis* but it flowers about a month earlier.

Natural hybridisation combining characters of both species have been observed in this area.

*Telopea oreades*Image: <http://plantnet.rbg Syd.nsw.gov.au>

Telopea oreades is considered not at risk in the wild and is not entered on the EPBC list. Like other waratahs it has an underground tuber which may resprout after fires or after serious pest damage has been controlled.

It grows naturally in moist acidic soils, often along creeks in wet sclerophyll forest or cool rainforest at altitudes ranging from 200 to 1100 metres. It requires a well drained site with regular watering. Some clay in the soil has been shown to be beneficial. It is highly shade tolerant and this factor has carried over to the cultivar T. 'Shady Lady red', a chance seedling that arose in a Melbourne garden between *T. oreades* and *T. speciosissima*. *T. oreades* is a parent of other cultivars such as T. 'Emperor's Torch', T. 'Gembrook', T. 'Shady Lady crimson', T. 'Shady Lady pink' and T. 'Shady Lady white'. The species itself is rarely grown in gardens. The cultivars have the best of both worlds - the tight flower heads of *T. speciosissima* and the shrub form and hardiness of *T. oreades*.

Viable seed usually germinates within 6 weeks of sowing. Seedlings may be susceptible to damping off (a fungal disease) which can be controlled by spraying with Anti-Rot. Cuttings are more difficult and can be very slow to strike.

Is anyone growing *T. oreades*? Please let us know your experiences.

Checklist of *Telopea* species and varieties (Recent additions are in blue)Species:

<i>Telopea aspera</i>	Gibraltar Range NSW
<i>Telopea mongaensis</i>	Braidwood Waratah - NSW
<i>Telopea oreades</i>	Gippsland Waratah - Vic.
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	NSW Waratah
<i>Telopea truncata</i>	Tasmanian Waratah

Pink Cultivars:

<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Brimstone Pink' - Fire 'n Brimstone (Nixon)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Brimstone Pink Passion'
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Shade of Pale'
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i> x <i>T. truncata</i> <i>lutea</i>	'Champagne' (Downe)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i> x <i>truncata</i>	'Digger' - Wild Brumby (Fitzpatrick)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i> x <i>mongaensis</i>	'Mallee Boy' - Wild Brumby (Fitzpatrick)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Tutu'
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Clarence Pink'
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'In the Pink' (Yellow Rock Nursery/Nixon)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i> x ' <i>Wirrimbirra White</i> '	'Dreaming' (Fitzpatrick)

Red Cultivars:

<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Ballerina'
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Brimstone Blush' - Fire 'n Brimstone (Nixon)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Brimstone Early' - Fire 'n Brimstone (Nixon)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Cardinal'
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Corroboree'
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Corrakee' (Karwarra Gardens)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i> x <i>oreades</i>	'Emperor's Torch' - Ausflora Pacific, Gembrook Vic.
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Fire and Brimstone' - Fire 'n Brimstone (Nixon)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Fire 'n Ice' (Roy Rother, Emerald Vic/Downe)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i> x <i>oreades</i>	'Gembrook' - Ausflora Pacific, Gembrook Vic.
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Green Bracts'
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Mirragon'
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Olympic Flame' - Mt Annan (Cathy Offord)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Red Centre'
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Roger's Red' Gordon Meiklejohn (Brimstone Waratahs)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Songlines' - Yellow Rock Nursery, Winmallee NSW
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Starfire' Gordon Meiklejohn (Brimstone Waratahs)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Stringers Late'
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Sunflare' - Mt Annan (Cathy Offord)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Sunburst' University of Sydney (Offord, Nixon, Goodwin)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i> x <i>mongaensis</i>	'Braidwood Brilliant'
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i> x <i>oreades</i>	'Shady Lady Crimson' - Proteaflora
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i> x <i>oreades</i>	'Shady Lady Pink' - Proteaflora

Red Cultivars:

<i>Telopea mongaensis</i> x <i>speciosissima</i>	'Canberry Gem' - (Dougs hybrid/Canberry Coronet)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i> x <i>truncata</i>	'Sugar Plum' - Wild Brumby (Fitzpatrick)
<i>Telopea truncata</i>	'Tasman Red'

White Cultivars:

<i>Telopea oreades</i>	'Errindundra White'
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Wirrimbirra White' (also marketed briefly as 'Shady Lady White' - naturally occurring <i>T. speciosissima</i> clone found in the NSW Water Board area by Thistle Stead. Link http://www.wirrimbirra.com.au/Wirrimbirra%20white.htm
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i> x <i>oreades</i>	'Shady Lady White' (improved) same as 'Bridal Gown' (Downe)
<i>T. speciosissima</i> x <i>truncata</i>	'Snow Maiden' - Wild Brumby (Fitzpatrick)

Yellow/Cream Cultivars:

<i>Telopea speciosissima</i> x <i>truncata</i> <i>lutea</i>	'Shady Lady Yellow' same as 'Golden Globe' (Downe)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i> x <i>truncata</i>	'Georgie Girl' - Wild Brumby (Fitzpatrick)
<i>Telopea truncata</i>	'St Mary's Sunrise'
<i>Telopea truncata</i>	'West Coast Yellow'

Checklist of Actinotus species and varieties

<i>Actinotus forsythii</i>	Blue Mts, NSW, Vic
<i>Actinotus gibbonsii</i>	NSW, QLD
<i>Actinotus helianthi</i>	NSW, Qld (Flannel Flower)
<i>Actinotus leucocephalus</i>	WA
<i>Actinotus minor</i>	NSW, Qld
<i>Actinotus moorei</i>	Tas
<i>Actinotus superbus</i>	WA
<i>Actinotus schwartzii</i>	MacDonnell Ranges SA

Ref: Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants, Vol 2,
Elliot and Jones, Lothian 1982

Wikipedia also lists

<i>Actinotus bellidioides</i>	
<i>Actinotus glomeratus</i>	
<i>Actinotus humilis</i>	
<i>Actinotus omnifertilis</i>	
<i>Actinotus paddisonii</i>	Bourke NSW
<i>Actinotus rhomboideus</i>	
<i>Actinotus suffocatus</i>	
