

N E W S L E T T E R

PLANTS OF TASMANIA
NURSERY AND GARDENS
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Newsletter 12 Autumn 2004

Welcome to autumn. And welcome to the autumn newsletter of 2004. Apologies for the lack of newsletter in spring last year - I was **overcome by preoccupation**. Another interesting weather season has just slipped by. A dry and warm to hot start, and we all thought it was going to be a **stinker** of a summer, then that **magnificent deluge** in late January, followed by a mild, rather innocuous February. Can't pick em.

VERY IMPORTANT NOTE

We started our newsletter in 1996 - eight years ago now, and in that time have never surveyed our readers to see if they are still keen to receive our humble screeed. We feel it is time to update our mailing list, so we have enclosed a self addressed envelope with this newsletter. Now to keep receiving our newsletter you'll need to write your name and address on the back of the envelope and post it back. We will amend the mailing list accordingly. If we do not receive your acknowledgment we will assume you would rather not continue with the newsletter (Of course I will be extremely upset).

Now believe it or not, **we have a full palette of potted plants**, now available, and awaiting good homes. As a Tasmanian visitor said the other day, "I had no idea there was such a range of plants occurring in Tasmania." The unique botanical palette of **Van Diemens Land**. Enough for your very own picturesque.

But let me mumble no further. Although all the plants we grow occur somewhere in Tasmania, some of our interesting forms are such individuals, that they may only occur once, somewhere! Take the new form of *Melaleuca gibbosa* we now have available. I must have seen tens of thousands of this species in the wild, and all of them mauve of flower. But one of our good customers spotted a pink one. Perhaps only one occurs in the whole of Tassie! Well not any more - there are now hundreds at Ridgeway! That's evolution for you - **survival of the fittest**. What a fit and clever plant. By flowering pink, it has succeeded in rapidly being re-created, so passing on its genetic makeup, at the expense of its compatriots, and whatsmore it's going to spread itself far and wide in the process! But we ask, will this make it truly happy?

Anyway - it's a very nice plant, with a rather hot pink flower, and because we love all those silly commercial names that turn up on various plants, we've labelled it *Melaleuca gibbosa*, **Pink Passion!** (My alternative name of Hot Flush, got voted down)

And whilst we're on colours, we're looking forward this spring (late spring) to having a range of colours available for the enchanting *Dampiera stricta*. We will be **enhancing its desirability** by presenting a choice of the usual **sky blue**, but also a **deep, deep blue** and a **mauve!** But probably no silly names. We'll let the product speak for itself.

Other new offerings we now have available include:

A small *Pelargonium australe* I've called, **Mini M**. I found this one near the M road, a forestry road in eastern Tas. Quite a petite little number.

I'm still chuffed to have the **Wedding Bush** (*Ricinocarpus pinifolius*) in stock. They are quite happy in our potting mix, so as a pot plant they should be fine. In the garden they would need a light or sandy soil. Beautiful white bouquets of spring flowers followed by attractive seed pods over summer.

In the M rated section we have *Wahlenbergia gymnoclada*, the **Naked Bluebell**. This native bluebell has quite large, seriously purple flowers, and would add a lovely splash of colour to the garden.

Some years ago we were lucky enough to be provided with a small amount of plant material from a little alpine gem, *Gaultheria depressa*, the **Creeping Snowberry**. They're very slow to grow (so a tiny plant is worth \$9.50) but we love em. Too young to reproduce yet, but someday we hope to have flowers and berries.

Lovely to have **Kangaroo Grass** (*Themeda triandra*) back in stock. One of my favourites. We have a rather nice grey leaved form coming on, probably ready next spring.

Also for next spring or summer we expect to have white flowering **Trigger Plants** (*Stylidium*) available. Quite a stunning plant in flower as the flowering stems have a reddish hue, which sets off the white flowers quite magnificently.

We have a densely tufted, bright green, spreading sedge (to 20cm high), *Uncinia flaccida* or **Mountain Hooksedge**. It may spread in a moist garden, so be cautious, but looks lovely in the pot.

Don't tell anyone, but we do have some *Acacia mucronata* '**Derwent Cascade**' for sale. We're waiting for confirmation of a new species name. It's a dense weeping bush to at least 3m x 3m, and makes quite a statement in the garden.

We have *Apalochlamys spectabilis* in stock. An unusual plant. Would be quite striking in the right spot.

We also have *Daviesia latifolia*, the **Bitter Hop Pea** back in the lineup. Striking foliage. Great plant!

Also *Gynatrix pulchella*, **Fragrant Hempbush**. Unusual, big shrub. Can be straggly. Can be trimmed.

And lastly, *Hakea ulicifolia*, **Furze Hakea** from Flinders Island is new for us. Looks quite benign in the pot as a small plant, but I can assure you, I needed stout gloves to collect the seeds! I like this shrub. It has attitude.

SALE - from Sat 20th March

We are moving out left over stock from last season. It's mostly rootbound, but still healthy. Give away prices - tubestock is 12 plants for \$10. (or 70 plants for \$50). Other sizes as marked. Only a limited variety of species available but there's still a fair selection if you can get in early- newsletter readers get first bite, then we'll advertise in the press from the following weekend.

BONSAI NEWS

For those of you who read the 2002 spring newsletter, I included an article on using Tasmanian plants for bonsai. Re-reading the article, I find that 18 months later, there's quite a bit I'd change if I wrote it now. Not so much the plant information, but certainly my thoughts on design. Isn't it good to see I'm open to change!

My bonsai highlight for last year was attending a national bonsai conference in Melbourne. I came back very enthused. About one third of the bonsai on display were Australian native plants, and there were some fascinating speakers! I also met some very interesting people, and engaged in much thought provoking discussion, and I now feel absolutely compelled to attend this years conference in Canberra!

And if that's not enough - I also feel compelled to open a Tasmanian plants Bonsai nursery, (down the street a bit) and providing I can get all the building works organised, (in this mad frenzy of building at the moment where every tradesperson seems to be booked up for two years) this will hopefully be at the end of this year. I will be open one weekend a month or by appointment. I will also be conducting regular classes, and if there's enough interest, would like to get together with other interested people on a regular basis to learn and share experiences of bonsai-ing with the Tasmanian flora.

I will be starting a bonsai newsletter, later this year or early in 2005, with dates of classes, any likely guest appearances of bonsai gurus, and notes about various plants suitable for bonsai etc. If you are interested, let us know at Plants of Tasmania and we can put you on the bonsai mailing list. As well as bonsai and miniature gardens with the Tasmanian flora, I am also looking forward to stocking a large range of pots, a good selection of tools and some nice books.

Our main feature for this autumn newsletter is an article on garden design using Tasmanian plants, by our newest employee, Sam Routley. Sam works two days a week at Plants of Tasmania and she has proved to be an excellent acquisition. She loves our Tasmanian plants, as you will see from her following article.

DESIGNING WITH TASMANIAN NATIVE PLANTS - Providing Structure in the Garden

Structure in the garden is in part provided by features such as paths, retaining walls, decks, fences and screens, paved areas and hardened edges. In the horticultural business, these are collectively known as the 'hard landscaping'. Through these features the outdoor space is broken up into various areas. We then use plants to help link aspects of the hard landscape and to soften, the otherwise hard edges. Plants themselves provide structure. A well designed garden with carefully chosen plants can be not only practical in its aims, but also a harmonious and enjoyable space to be in.

How we can use plants to provide structure

1. Variation in height

Knowing the ultimate height of the plant in given growing conditions allows you to place plants in the garden to achieve maximum benefit from them. Across a garden bed plant a variety of heights. Place the tallest plants in the centre of the bed and gradually come down in height as you work your way out to the edge of the bed. Avoid choosing plants of only one height. When you are planting along a fence or a boundary to create a screen, plant two or three irregularly placed rows. Plant smaller trees or shrubs as the inside row to create a sense of intimacy from within the garden. If you have a slope to landscape, think about placing some taller shrubs at the bottom of the slope and smaller ones at the top. Eventually the slope will begin to appear as though it is carpeted in vegetation, similar to the feeling of a windswept coastline.

2. Delineation of space

Large areas of otherwise structure-less open space, such as that created by large lawns, paved areas, car parks or even paddocks, can be broken up by various plantings. Lawns can be reduced by creating wide beds around the edges or by planting big island beds within the lawn that are linked by meandering paths. Paving can be softened by establishing garden beds around the edges. Carefully placed beds within the paving, that will not interfere with its intended use, will also reduce the monotony of a paved or hardened surface. Here you could feature a particular tree you love, such as *Banksia marginata* or *Allocasurina verticillata* (She Oak). Healthy plants in attractive pots will instantly liven a featureless deck or verandah. A south facing deck or patch of paving is perfect for a collection of Tasmania's rainforest plants, many of which do well in pots.

3. Planting in multiples

Planting in multiples emphasises the characteristics of particular plants, whether it be their foliage type, or the overall texture, colour, or shape of a plant. In nature you will always see repetition of plant species. What is more beautiful than a button grass plain flowering in late summer? Or the *Eucalyptus pulchella* (White Peppermint) woodland around Ridgeway? Doing this in your own garden can create a naturalistic and harmonious effect. It is also wise to combine plants that complement each other. Choose a small number of species for a bed and then plant multiples of each. You might only have three of a taller species, but many of smaller, more delicate plants. You may choose to plant masses of only one species. This is frequently done with native grasses, which looks effective and is practical in difficult sites. I have also seen this done to great effect with *Leucophyta brownii* (Coastal Cushion Bush) at an exposed coastal house. Modern architecture lends itself to minimalist planting. Brightly painted or colourbond clad houses are well suited to multiple plantings where colour and foliage type can be emphasised for dramatic effect. Silver foliaged shrubs, grasses and ferns can be used creatively around a modern home or an old one that has been given a trendy makeover.

4. Create Contrasts

Often it takes many years of experimentation to discover what plants work well together. Sometimes it is just a fluke! Plants can complement each other by creating stark contrasts. This is something you will also find endless examples of, in nature. Forests of *Blechnum wattsii* (Hard Water Fern) and *Lepidosperma* sp on the South Coast Rack of South West Rivulet spring to mind. The contrast of red tinged fronds against the strappy long green leaves of the *Lepidosperma* is a wonderful design concept. One of my favourite combinations in our display garden is the *Allocasurina crassa* (Cape Pillar She Oak near the front entrance which has a *Billardiera longiflora*, Climbing Blueberry "Notley Gorge" growing up through it, almost to the top branches. In early summer this is an amazing sight. The combination of the thick *Crassa* foliage, the bright red *Crassa* flowers and the twining *Billiardiera* holding its delicate but large green bell shaped flowers is exquisite. By making the most of unusual contrasts you can create an artistic framework in your garden. When you combine contrasting plants in multiples you have a chance to design a garden which is unique in your street.

It is also good to think how your garden can complement the exterior of your home. I mentioned how the colour and design of modern homes are suited to bold multiple plantings. It is important to think about the style of your house and to decide what sort of plants and types of plantings will suit your house. (it is also important to choose plants suited to the climate where you live, but that should be the topic of another newsletter!) Think about some themes such as spiky, soft or sparsely foliaged plants. Or combining foliage colours such as silvers, pale greens, green greens or dark greens. And of course you can combine flower colours and types. Think how a single planting may look wonderful near your house. Sometimes absolute simplicity is necessary to really highlight the beauty of a tree or shrub.

You are limited only by your imagination. ... (And the time you have to spend in your garden and the patience you have to experiment and your climate type and your raucous dog and naughty children and husbands (or wives) with careless regard for Round-up...!)

What follows is a list of very garden worthy plants that I think have merit for their ability to add structure to your garden. They are all easy to grow in the right situation.

Acacia stricta Silver Hop Wattle- silver foliated wattle
Acacia genitifolia prostrate form- great for hanging over retaining walls
Arcadenia frankliniae Whitey Wood- Dense green whorled foliage (needs a cool moist spot)
Anopterus glandulosus Native Laurel- Large dark green leaves, clusters of white or pink flowers. Exquisite. (also for a cool moist position).
Atriplex cinerea Coastal Salt Bush- Low fast growing silver shrub
Allocasurina crassa Cape Pillar She Oak- unusual thick fencing- wire like foliage. Females have vibrant red tufty flowers.
Allocasurina littoralis Bull Oak- Upright fine foliage. Beautiful after rain.
Banksia marginata- Always a favourite. Check out the bonsai like coastal form.
Baloskion tetraphyllum Tassel Cord Rush- Tall bright green grass for a damp spot with plumes of feathery flower heads
Bedfordia linearis Slender Blanket Leaf- Narrow whorled leaves, with silver to white under surfaces
Blechnum nudum Soft Water Fern- Large fern with lime green fronds
Blechnum watsii Hard Water Fern- New red growth contrasts with chunky dark green older leaves. Needs a fairly shady moist spot
Callitris oblonga South Esk Pine- Almost blue-green foliage, columnar shape, very tidy and formal.
Correa alba- Hardy low shrub with pale green leaves with rust - coloured undersurfaces. White star shaped flowers. (The spreading form "Low Grow Grey" grows to only about 20cm x 1m wide)
Dianella tasmanica Native flax Lily- Fantastic dark green strappy leafed grass. Great in clumps. does well in shade.
Dicksonia antarctica Tree Fern Another favourite. Only really suited to cool moist spots though.
Eucalyptus species- Many are suited to domestic gardens. The following generally grow to between 10 and 15 metres tall and have interesting trunks or leaves: *E. barberi*, *E. pauciflora*, *E. perimiana*, *E. pulchella*, *E. risdonii* and *E. tenuramis*.
Eucryphia lucida- Leatherwood. Beautifully shaped tree, lime green alternate foliage. (We also have a variegated form). Large white flowers in summer. Liven a shady moist spot.
Gymnoschoenus sphaerocephalus- Button Grass. Striking grass for a wet area. Spherical buttons form on long stalks in summer.
Grevillea australis- prostrate form. Very hardy fine foliated grevillea. Great for cascading down a wall.
Hakea species- Shaply shrubs with needle like foliage. Try *H. sericea* (we have one with pink tinged flowers), *H. epiglottis*, *H. nodosa*, (foliage is softer to touch than other Hakeas) or *H. Lissosperma* (likes it a bit cooler and moister than others).
Leucophyta brownii- Coastal Cushion Bush. Like a big silver ball. Very good in dry conditions.
Lepidosperma ensiformae- Extremely elegant sedge featuring light green strappy leaves. Base of the new leaves is tinged with red. Needs a cool moist spot.
Leptospermum grandiflorum- Silver Lighthouse. Very popular tea tree due to its silver foliage and big, white flowers.
Leptospermum laningerum- "Bronze Summer". A selected form of the Woolly Tea Tree with vivid bronze new growth.
Lomatia tinctoria- "Guitar Plant". Small shrub with fern like foliage and striking clusters of fragrant cream flowers in summer.
Leptospermum scoparium prostrate- We have 3 varieties of this hardy prostrate tea tree. Very good for banks and for edges of retaining walls.
Nematolepis squamea - Satinwood. An elegant tree for a slightly moister position. Undersides of leaves are silver.
Notolea ligustrina- Native Olive. Lovely bright, light green foliage, good shape. New growth has burgundy tinge and berries are an apricot colour.
Nothofagus cunninghamii- Myrtle. Stately tree ubiquitous in the tasmanian rainforest. Also beautiful in a cool shady garden.

Ozothamnus ledifolius- Mountain Spice. Small alpine shrub with a wonderful combination of bright green foliage, leaf undersurface yellow and new flower heads can be orange or red. Needs a cool moist spot.
Poa species- Very hardy tufted grasses. *Poa labillardierei* grows to 1 metre, while our tiniest specimen, *Poa sieberiana* "tiny tuft", only grows to about 15cm.
Tasmannia lanceolata- Native Pepper. Hardy in a cool moist spot- Big bright green leaves contrasted with fantastic red stems. Lovely flowers followed by big black berries.
Themeda triandra- Kangaroo Grass. Effective planted en-masse to emphasise the distinctive seed heads.
Zieria aborescens- Tallish shrub, sparsely foliaged, but with large pendulous clusters of small pale pink or white flowers in spring.
Zieria littoralis- Coastal silver foliaged shrub to 1m, with pale pink flowers.

by Sam Routley 2004

Wildflower Spectacular 2004

The Australian Plants Society will be holding one of their wonderfully inspirational plant and flower shows in the City Hall in late spring this year. The whole hall will be decked out with foliage and flower. If you've never been to one of these rare events (they only happen every two or three years) **don't miss this one** - they are a delight to the eye and the senses! The theme this year is *Water in the Garden*. Plants of Tasmania will be putting on a display, under the artistic direction of our very talented, Paulette. It'll be one not to be missed! More details in the spring newsletter.

We trust you will have a great autumn (what a beautiful season), and a warm and contented winter, interspersed with invigorating walks in the crisp sub-continental air.
As for me, I will be well rugged up, beanie and gloved, toiling away in the frigid wind, on an exposed and muddy block, building a bonsai centre, and muttering, muttering constantly, wondering who on earth came up with this idea!

And remember, if you would like to continue with the newsletters, you'll need to let us know.

Till spring,
Horticulturally yours,

Will, and wonderful staff - Lydia, Paulette, Sam, Lindy and Dave.