

N E W S L E T T E R

PLANTS OF TASMANIA

NURSERY AND GARDENS

65 HALL ST RIDGEWAY 7054

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

9am-5pm (Winter 9am-4pm)

(Closed Christmas day, Boxing day, Good Friday, and Targa afternoon)

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Newsletter 15 Spring 2005

Hello growers of fine Tasmanian plants,

What a splendid season is spring! And this one in particular, especially now we've had such a goodly drop of rain to set off a sterling growing season. With the imminent arrival of the seasonal time of annual clock adjustment, a gardeners heart is bound to leap with joy, with the thought of languid post-work potterings amongst the oxygenating foliage.

Whilst one may enjoy the cut and thrust of politics, wonder and/or despair at the progression of humankind through the ages, spend countless hours addictedly glued to the computer screen, or just be plain bogged down with the relentless certainty of work, family and washing up, remember there is always the garden!

Have a holiday at home! This week only! Great deals! Step out the backdoor and breathe! (Conditions apply).

SHOWCASING SPRING'S BOUNTY - WOODLAND WILDFLOWER GARDENS

With the onset of the season's magnificent floral bouquet, I am reminded of the wonderful wildflower displays I have seen around Australia and in Tasmania. In Tasmania these beautiful floral vistas are often in the spring seasons following bushfire (on the northern isle, often the season following rain!) and the colourful scenes are not only because of the timely emergence of quick-flowering post-bushfire species, but also because a lot of bushes that would normally obscure the low growing plants, are gone! Probably sprouting again, but not bushy again for some years.

In the northern hemisphere, meadow gardens have been popular for some time now, and our equivalent in Australia could be say, woodland wildflower gardens. My image of such a garden would be a blend of graceful native grasses and drifts of herbaceous flowering plants - daisies, bluebells, trigger plants etc - set off with a few trunks of trees and maybe a few well buried rocks. A casual path winding through, and a simple seat would complete the picture. As the years progress, the plants would set seed and regeminate, continually reinventing the original design.

The vision is there but the practicalities of successfully maintaining such a garden are possibly time consuming, certainly initially with weeds being the main problem, especially weed grasses. When young, many grasses are very difficult to distinguish, so attempting to maintain a native grassland without the incursion of weed grasses could be challenging.

One method of greatly reducing future weeding hours would be to place a surface layer of a weedfree material, that would suppress most existing weed seed germination but still be a medium to encourage the germination of the native grasses and wildflowers in future years.

We are well used to placing various materials down as mulch, so this process is not too different. I would envisage a material similar to a potting mix, in this case perhaps a blend of two parts of fine composted pine bark or other compost, to one part freely draining sand, laid as a mulch but also as a medium to plant into. The garden could be constructed as follows:

1. Cultivate the existing soil and rake out to a smooth finish (as you would for a lawn)
2. Position rocks, paths, seats, rock pools etc as required
3. Lay a 50 - 70mm deep layer of the composted pine/coarse sand mix over the soil (this mix could either be mixed at the landscaping supplies yard, or at home in a mixer or even barrow!)
4. Plant out the area with an assortment of beautiful flowering wildflowers and grasses in whatever mix that takes your fancy (preferably use tubestock so as not to disturb the soil layers) See point 7.
5. Be diligent in weeding, especially during the first few years. (If you are unlucky enough to have the presence of really invasive weeds such as twitch, maybe rethink the options for that area!)
6. As the years progress, weed, trim, interplant as needed - but mostly enjoy! Each garden will be different, some plants will thrive, others may wane. If you let your plants seed, you will have the pleasure of seeing new plants germinate (and the worry of wondering if they are native!) and you may then leave nature to redesign your garden, or interact as much as you like to maintain a balance of species you prefer. Easy!
7. The plants. The fun bit. There are oodles of beautiful wildflowers available. Although most flower from September to January, there are some species that you can include to flower at different times, and in a garden like this there will nearly always be something happily flowering out of season. The grasses may be best planted in drifts as can many of the wildflowers but some intermingling is nice if the natural look is aimed for. Colours can be coordinated or your garden could just be a riot of colour. Plant as many plants as you can afford. If the budget is limited, look for plants that will seed quickly and readily or others that you can divide as they grow. A small area such as a courtyard space would look very nice as a woodland wildflower garden.

There are many, many plants suited to such a planting. A few of my favourites are:

Arthropodium milleflorum	Vanilla Lily
Baeckea ramosissima	Creeping Baeckea
Brachyscome species	Daisies
Bracteantha species	Everlasting daisies
Brunonia australis	Blue Pincushion
Bulbine species	Yellow Lillies
Calocephalus citrius	Lemon Beauty Heads
Chrysocephalum apiculatum	Yellow Buttons
Craspedia glauca	Billy Buttons
Cryptandra amara	Sweet Winter Cryptandra
Dampiera stricta	Blue Dampiera

Epacris impressa	Common Heath
Epacris species	Heaths
Helichrysum species	Everlastings
Kennedia prostrata	Running Postman
Leucopogon species	Bearded Heaths
Pelargonium australe	Southern Storksbill
Pimelea humilis	Dwarf Pimelea
Pratia pedunculata	Buckland Blue
Stackhousia monogyna	Candles
Stylidium graminifolium	Trigger Plant
Tetratheca species	Blackeyed Susan
Velleia paradoxa	Spur Velleia
Viola hederaceae	Native Violet
Wahlenbergia species	Bluebells

And for grasses and other tufties:

Austrodanthonia species	Wallaby Grasses
Dichelachne species	Plume Grasses
Diplarrena moraea	Flag Iris
Isolepis nodosa	Knobby Club Rush
Lomandra nana	Pale Mat Rush
Lomandra longifolia	Sagg
Poa species	Tussock Grasses
Stipa species	Spear Grasses

NEW WATTLE

A handsome wattle bush from which we took cuttings and found a few seed, some six or eight years ago, has now been officially classified as a new species. Growing just off a roadside parking area by the Derwent River, upstream of New Norfolk, it was identified at the Herbarium in Hobart as a form of *Acacia mucronata*, but was decidedly different from anything I had seen previously.

We began growing this wattle and planted one in the garden which is now a striking shrub about 3m high and wide with narrow cascading foliage. To celebrate its origins we called it *Acacia mucronata* 'Derwent Cascade'.

Over the past four years (with some prompting from Andrew Lawson from Molesworth who also realised these plants were significantly different), Alan Gray from the Tasmanian Herbarium has worked through the required processes and now classified the wattle as a new species, *Acacia derwentiana*. (I've just looked at our labels rack, and of course we've just bought a batch of 250 labels with the old name! Damn!)

Acacia derwentiana doesn't seem to set much seed, so we have taken to growing it mainly from cuttings and at present we do have plenty in stock. It is a beautiful, graceful wattle, very dense and spreading out to about 3m wide. It is a Sept - Oct flowerer in a soft creamy yellow. Out by the Derwent it seemed to be quite happy with its feet actually in the water whilst others were growing up the bank in a dry paddock - it would seem to be very adaptable.

BIRDS

A couple of splendid pamphlets on birds in the Hobart area, have just been released from the University of Tasmania, produced by Grant Daniels and Prof. James Kirkpatrick, on behalf of Birds Tasmania.

We have kindly been granted permission to copy these and we have included them with this newsletter to whet your appetite.

Just like humans, birds like foods from many sources as the lists show. Hopefully we will be encouraged to create plentiful bird spaces, especially to entice our indigenous species to drop by!

EUCALYPTUS CORDATA

We have a surplus of this handsome, silvery-foliaged tree in stock at present. The Silver Gum is endemic to the south east of Tassie and often grows in a pyramidal shape up to about 10 or 15m, so you need a reasonably sized garden. Whilst our excess stocks last, we are selling them at **\$1 each**.

POETRY CORNER

(or I can't think of anything sensible to write, so it's limericks to end of page!)

There was a fine plant from Tasmania
that grew well because of the rain there
with flowers white and scented
the bees went demented
so can you determine its name yeah?

Some pardalotes spotted the pinebark
we'll nest here, they thought, what a fine lark
but a lark they were not
so they burrowed a lot
until it was cosy and quite dark

A customer planted a shrubbery
which was shortly attacked by a grubbery
but they ate to pupate
before twas too late
and the gardener was reduced to sad
blubbery!

A nuseryman had trouble being sensible
his wife thought this most reprehensible
so he studied most wearious
in attempt to be serious
but in the end, he just couldn't be bothered - even trying to find a rhyme
seemed just too incomprehensible!

And that (thank goodness) is your lot for now. I hope your spring is just terrific and sets up a magnificent summer to come.

We look forward to seeing you up here amongst the wildflowers and the wild weather of spring. And on nice days too!

Horticulturally yours,

Will Fletcher and staff.