

# 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 16

Autumn 2006

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**Hello growers of fine Tasmanian plants,**

Greetings, this early autumn - in fact today as I tap ineptly at the keyboard, it is indeed the first day of autumn! Why this unseemly haste for the autumn newsletter? Yes, it's come as a shock to me too, I'm normally dragged to the keyboard with winter breathing down my neck!

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Well as it turns out, we're having a sale, sorry we're having a **SALE**, and there is not much point in having a sale if we don't let you know, right? As we did last time, we are giving you **advance notice**, and after you've had a good pick, then we will advertise in the press. Now this is a seriously

**BIG sale** - we seem to be overstocked with a lot of plants, so it's our biggest ever! Check out the list of some of the plants available a few pages over, there'll be **lots**, with most prices **40-60% off and more!** So pop by and snaffle up a bargain! Anything from tubestock to big stuff!

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So when's it on? Commencing **Saturday, election day, 18th March**, and running for two to three weeks. (whilst stocks last of course) So if your horse gets across the line first, (sorry, if your distinguished candidate gets across the line), or even gets a place, drop by and buy some celebratory plants; or if the runner you backed, falls back in the field, drop by and get some commiseratory bargains!

With the later part of summer and early autumn now being relatively dry, a bit of extra water for the first weeks or month after planting will kick new plants along nicely, as the soil is warm and the roots will get away quickly. Early plantings in autumn allow plants to become established and settled in well before winter. And remember, **soil preparation is crucial** - loosen up the soil well and dig in some compost or potting mix if soils are fairly ordinary. This can make a huge difference to the establishment of new plants.

## Rainforest Gardens

Many of us enjoy the thought of having a thriving patch of 'rainforest' in our backyards, and indeed, most of us can! **Moisture, organic matter, shade and shelter (think M.O.S.S.)** are really important for healthy rainforest plants, (although some are quite hardy in more exposed sites) and if we don't already have such a garden area in waiting, they can often be easily manufactured.

Some of us have a geographic advantage in this respect. If you live at Fern Tree, Cockle Creek, Collinsvale, Scottsdale, the north west or the west coast of Tasmania, you don't need to do much to establish a rainforest garden. And if you live in drier, warmer climes, a south facing slope or a creek may well be a good starting point. And there's always the south side of the house - often an overlooked part of the garden. In fact quite often bathrooms are situated on the south side of the house and one can create a beautiful little private rainforest garden by building a high screening fence, sticking in a big picture window (great for natural light in the bathroom anyway) and filling this feature garden with a selection of lush ferns and other rainforestry type plants. Beautiful!

I myself have dreamed of having a south facing courtyard, featuring a magnificent, weeping Huon Pine underplanted with moss and Pretty Grass Flag. I fear however, I may not live long enough to see it. Probably better to go bush and pitch a tent in such a spot!

A word of caution. Many folks look to establish their rainforest patch under the shade of existing trees. This certainly satisfies the shade requirement, but established trees can soak up an enormous quantity of water, and they will quickly spread their roots into your new garden. In this situation, soil preparation and enrichment is vital. Do lots of digging, add lots of compost and keep the water up. You can even dig a trench between your new garden and the trees, to break off feeder roots - this is best done in winter so as to not adversely affect the established trees. This trench can then be re-dug, say twice a year, to keep the big trees roots away whilst your new plants are establishing.

So, back to **M.O.S.S.** (Once you have the garden set up, moss'll probably turn up anyway). If you follow the MOSS guidelines, your chances of having a successful rainforest garden are well and truly maximised.

**M = Moisture** When first planted you may have to water every couple of days if it's dry and warm, but when established, water your rainforest garden with a good soak, about once a week. Depending on your situation, you may well be able to go longer - two weeks is certainly quite feasible. This allows you to go away, without too much worry about the garden. (In much of Tassie it'll have probably rained by then anyway!)

However, it is best not to try to establish the garden in a bog - you need the water to flow through the soil. If you do have a bog, your options are to build up some soil and organic matter above the bog (such as a low mound), partially drain the bog, or plant a different sort of garden, say..... a bog garden!

**O = Organic matter** You need organic matter **in** the soil, and **on top** of the soil. The organic matter you dig into the soil should be well composted and can easily represent 50% of the soil layer. For example, you could loosen up your soil initially (being careful not to mix subsoil with the topsoil) then spread a 15cm (6 inch) layer of compost and dig it in. This compost can be home made compost, or some well rotted down organic material from a landscape supplies centre - there are many sorts, often blends of manures or fish waste with aged fine pinebark, mulched garden waste etc. At the Hobart tip for example, they sell well rotted down compost from garden prunings and leaves.

Do not use fresh manures in your garden - some old manure is fine, but you don't need it to be as rich as a vegetable garden would require.

The organic material you put on top or the soil does not need to be fully composted. Partially composted is good, new fresh mulch is usually O.K. Pinebark, gumbark or other organic matter is fine. This material will gradually break down and add to your organic soil layer. Worms and other little beasties will love it!



**S = Shade** Dappled shade, part day shade, afternoon shade or even shady shade is usually required for rainforest plants to thrive. However if you live at, or near, any of the areas I listed earlier, then very little shade or none at all may be fine. It also depends **when** you plant. Planting in early summer in an open spot could lead to losses, whereas an autumn planting can give plants time to become more established before the next summer and thus handle the exposure much better.

Temporary shade can always be supplied during the first summer whilst your plants are getting settled in.

**S = Shelter** A shady spot on its own may not suffice, if boisterous winds regularly whip past the foliage. This is often the case next to houses where wind is funnelled between house walls and fences. In this situation it is usually relatively simple to build either a temporary or permanent wind moderating structure at one or either end of the garden. The best wind moderators are permeable structures such as shade-cloth, lattice or timber slatted gates, where some breeze can flow through, but not a gale! Solid structures can lead to uncomfortable turbulence.

OK, so the garden is ready - **now some plants!** This is the fun bit, but also sometimes so difficult because there are so many beautiful plants!

If you have room for some overstorey then there are the beautifully foliated **Myrtles**, summer flowering **Leatherwoods**, glossy leaved **Sassafras**, the statuesque **King Billy** and **Pencil Pine** clan and of course the wonderfully slow, fine foliated, cascading **Huon Pine**! Quite a few of these potential trees can be easily trimmed to appropriate suburban garden height if required.

Then there are the intermediate shrubs, including the handsomely foliated, glossy leaved **Native Laurels**, with their delightful sprays of white or pink bird-attracting flowers in spring. The **Native Pepper** bushes are also very well dressed with their red stems and bright green foliage. **Whitey Wood**, from the west coast has a beautiful foliage, mature **Waratahs** in flower are outstanding and the striking foliage of the **Richea** clan, especially the **Pandani** and *Richea drachophylla* are terrific!

Other shrubs which are slow, but well worth the wait are members of the *Cyathodes* clan (and other shrub *Epacridaceae*), with their fine foliage, tiny white bell-flowers and plump pink, red or mauve berries! *(This is getting far too exciting - I feel like leaping out and making a new rainforest garden straight away! However being the model of self control, I shall continue. And I mustn't forget the ferns...)*

The smaller aspect of the rainforest shrubbery could include, **Heartberry** - featuring arching branches bedecked in colourful berries, **Snowberry** - with the plumpest, whitest berries you've ever seen, **Christmas Bells** - so beautiful, yet so hard to grow, but always worth the try, **Pretty Grass Flag** - with the daintiest of white flowers and little fans of glossy green leaves, and of course, a selection of our delightful ferns, with their many different frond formations!

And many, many more! Now of course, some of you are not lucky enough to have space for a rainforest garden. Fear not. Most of these plants do make terrific pot plants, providing you have a reasonably sheltered, part or full-shaded outdoor spot. This way you can make a real feature of your favourites!

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**SALE STUFF:** some hints regarding the upcoming sale. We do have an abundance of **Leatherwoods** in different sizes and some ferns, also assorted *Bauera rubioides*, some **Waratah** and a few other assorted rainforestry type plants going cheap.

Also, definitely a whole batch of last seasons **Eucalypts** at 20 for \$10, assorted **teatree** - both taller growing shrubs and spreading forms, **button grass** and other wet area tufties, and lots and lots of other plants in both tube size and larger.

## New Plants

As well as our usual range of quality green-life, we have some fine new Tasmanian plants for sale this year.

*Agrostis parviflora* **Smallflower Bent** A small, soft, finely foliated grass for average to moist soils. For that soft, delicate look in the garden. Like many of the grasses it may well seed and spread. \$3.50

*Baumea tetragona* **Square Twigsedge** An erect clump of dark-green, 4-angled foliage for a moist spot. Certainly quite striking in the pot. \$3.50

*Cassinia trinerva* **Veined Dollybush** A fast growing shrub to 4m from the north-east. Due to its limited natural distribution, best not planted anywhere near bushland in other areas. \$3.50

*Centrolepis strigosa* **Hairy Bristlewort** A delightful little tufty for a moist spot, but only living for a few years. As with many short-lived plants, I would expect it to seed readily. \$2.85

*Craspedia alpina* **Alpine Billybuttons** Soft grey-green leaves with creamy-white or white button flowers on stems to 20cm, in spring or early summer. \$3.50

*Gompholobium ecostatum* **Dwarf Wedgepea** This small bush from Flinders Island (and further north) has the most exquisite orange pea-flowers in summer - if you can grow it! Best in a pot in a sunny spot, or try a sunny, sandy situation in the ground. To about 20cm. From \$3.50 in square tubes.

*Ozothamnus reflexifolius* **Reflexed Everlastingbush** A newly discovered, rare species, from dry, hilly country east of the Derwent River. To 60cm. Small, intricate leaves. Well drained or dry. \$4.50

*Pseudopanax gunnii* **Forest Fernbush** An interesting endemic Tasmanian shrub from southern and western forests, and actually related to Ivy. Likes a moist, fairly shady, well composted site. \$6.50

*Schoenoplectus pungens* **Sharp Clubsedge** (Doesn't seem very sharp in the pots - hope we've got the right name!) A robust, blue-green, tufted sedge to 1m, for moist or brackish water. \$3.50

*Stackhousia spathulata* **Coast Candles** A little beauty, especially for those sandy coastal sites or light, well drained sunny spots. Masses of flowers in late spring or early summer. \$3.50

*Thelionema caespitosum* **Tufted lily** A small tuft of soft foliage gives rise to starry, creamy-white flowers in late spring. Prefers a moist, well-drained soil, or thereabouts. \$4.50

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## New Sandpit!

Well, not entirely - but we do have new sand **and** new toys for our younger visitors! May peace reign.

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Well, we look forward to seeing you this coming season.

For those of you interested in the proposed bonsai nursery - it still remains proposed, however some building works have commenced, and I am quietly confident of having one at some time.....

Happy gardening and best wishes from Will and trusty staff - Linda, Peter and at more infrequent occasions, Paulette, Qug, Lydia and Sam.