

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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Hello and happy gardening!

It is the 26th March, 2008, in what looks like being one of the warmest Marches on record, the rain is driving in on an oblique angle and it's going to snow tonight! Tassie! Don't you love it? (*Mind you, it's now the 6th May.....how did that happen?*)

This rain (approx 25mm so far in the last 12 hours here at Ridgeway) is fantastic and hopefully heralds the start of a great autumn for planting! Autumn is an excellent time to be planting.

Due to the extended warmth into March, our plants have grown beautifully this year. They look so good I just feel like planting them all myself! Sometimes I wander through the assembled potted Tasmanian flora and marvel at the diversity, and possibilities for constructing landscapes! So many different shapes and foliages to play with! And this is indeed the theme for this newsletter.....

A Celebration of Foliage

As is often the case, I have been inspired recently by visits to wilder parts of Tasmania. In a number of places, two aspects of naturally occurring vegetation, had me delighted and entranced.

First, was the dynamic trunks of trees, especially when in large numbers with minimal undergrowth, such as either side of Derwent Bridge (possibly *Eucalyptus delegatensis* - shame on me, I was so busy admiring the woods, that I failed to identify the trees!). These cold-hardened trees with a reasonably sparse shrub understorey to about 1m high, extend for hectare upon hectare and are very sculptural.

A few days later, up on the subalpine slopes of the Mount Field range, the patterns and colours of the peeling bark on *Eucalyptus subcrenulata* were truly breathtaking! Smooth bark in mottled, warm, reddish-brown tones was peeling away to reveal striking patterns and shapes in almost luminous yellows and greens! Absolutely outstanding!

Secondly, I was soaking up the patterns of foliage in the landscape. After an absence of many years, I again scaled the magnificent flanks of Mt. Eliza in the south-west, with it's expansive vista over Fake Pedder, and myriads of mountain ranges disappearing into the distance. As expected, Mt. Eliza is taller

than it used to be (both going up and coming down) and my calves expressed their displeasure for days afterward!

The tracked ridge to Mt Eliza is open, with mixed buttongrass and small shrubs, (ideal to enjoy the expansive views) but the adjoining ridge to the north, Deception Ridge, is completely clothed in a rich, verdant mosaic of trees and tall shrubs. It is a rugged ridge and I never tire of soaking up its vista, as it leads upwards from the flat buttongrass plains to the craggy heights of Mt Anne, the next, and highest peak, along the plateau from Mt Eliza. Adding to its appeal, are the regular calls of leaf-hidden birds, clear as bells from across the valley. I have climbed this ridge over a dozen times in the last 30 years, and always the birds are there!

The patterns, foliage colours and three dimensional vista of this ridge (and others I saw later in the week) are very pleasing, and change through the day with the changing light. A large part of the attraction, I realised, was the repetition of a number of different tree species, maybe three to five species. Each tree was emerging partially from the canopy, to give either a domed or pointed countenance, and these trees were repeated, with no exact pattern, but with enough constancy to create a pleasing, topographical pattern in various shades of green.

So, how to create this living, textural mosaic in our own gardens? Probably not with the myrtles and sassafrass of south-west Tasmania! In the garden setting, in our smaller spaces, there are still many, many excellent Tasmanian plants with which to create your own mosaic. On a flatter garden area we could even start with lower growing shrubs in the foreground, merging into taller species towards the rear. This would give the impression of a slope, and maximise the visual impact. As the plants grew, regular trimming (once or twice yearly), may be needed to enhance or adjust the mosaic to keep it to the preferred size and to maintain the effect.

Suitable foliage plants

Given that most shrubs flower for 4-6 weeks in the year, and the foliage is what we see for 46-48 weeks of the year, it is sensible to design gardens with a view to enjoying foliage. The subtleties and nuances of foliage are limitless, but aside from just its integral beauty, it is one of the major players in making our planet habitable. So it is well to admire it and revere it. It is essential to our existence! (Perhaps this is my new marketing angle....*buy foliage now....it is essential to your existence!!!*)

Light and moisture (apart from being somewhat useful for plant growth) can give wonderful effects to foliage, both on the micro and macro scale. Sunlight glancing off leaves, water droplets arranged along leaf margins. If one takes the time to look, these moments can be magic.

We live amongst about 1500 species of indigenous plants in Tasmania. Across the seasons, their foliage will change; change in colour, change in size, and their leaves will look different in changing light and weather conditions.

Luckily we can grow many of these plants in the garden and make use of this wonderful variety in foliage, whilst feeling a direct connection to the broader landscape beyond the paling fence.

Almost every species will have visual differences between their leaves and if you planted two rows, or two blocks of two different species with what looked like identical leaves, almost invariably you will notice that once planted en masse, that they indeed do look different.

In the following categories we will look at various aspects of foliage and see what the Tasmanian flora has to offer.

Leaf colour

Green is popular. Shades of green; also sought after. But for some more obvious variety, other colours are often used. The following list, documents some of our less-green foliage colours. Check our catalogue for descriptions. (Note: many leaves have a different colour underneath, which can also be quite striking)

LOW PLANTS

Atriplex cinerea	Coast Saltbush	silvery grey
Azolla filiculoides	Red azolla	reddish (in sun)
Calocephalus lacteus	Milky Beautyheads	grey
Carpobrotus rossii	Pigface	purple tonings
Chrysocephalum apiculatum	Yellow Buttons	grey
Grevillea australis	(prostrate form)	grey green, purple tonings
Helichrysum leucopsidium	Satin Everlasting	grey
Lasiopetalum macrophyllum	Shrubby Velvetbush	reddish new growth
Leucophyta brownii	Silver Cushion Bush	silvery grey
Olearia phlogopappa var. subrepanda		grey green
Pelargonium australe	'Hanging Constable'	purple under-leaf
Spyridium vexilliferum	Propeller Plant	whitish leaf clusters
Zieria littoralis	Downy Zieria	grey

ALPINE PLANTS

Astelia alpina	Pineapple Grass	silvery grey
Celmisia astelifolia	Silver Snowdaisy	silvery grey
Olearia obcordata	Heartleaf Daisybush	olive grey
Pterygopappus lawrencei	Sage Cushionbush	silvery grey

TALLER SHRUBS & TREES

Acacia myrtifolia	Myrtle Wattle	reddish tones
Acacia pataczekii	Wally's Wattle	blue-green
Acacia stricta - silver form	Hop Wattle	silvery green
Acacia terminalis	Sunshine Wattle	reddish new growth
Banksia marginata	Silver Banksia	coloured new growth
Callistemon pallidus (some forms)	Lemon Bottlebrush	reddish new growth
Correa alba	White Correa	grey
Daviesia latifolia	Bitter Hop Pea	reddish new growth
Elaeocarpus reticulatus	Blueberry Ash	yellow-orange tonings
Eucryphia lucida	Leatherwood Cream	cream/green & pink tonings
Eucryphia lucida	Leatherwood Silver	cream/green & silver hues
Lasiopetalum macrophyllum	Tall Velvet Bush	reddish new growth
Leptospermum grandiflorum	'Silver Lighthouse'	silvery grey
Leptospermum lanigerum	'Woolly Pink'	grey green
Leptospermum lanigerum	'Bronze Summer'	purplish new growth
Nothofagus cunninghamii	Myrtle	autumn tonings in new growth
Nothofagus gunnii	Fagus/Deciduous Beech	yellow in autumn
Ozothamnus rosmarinifolius	'Silver Jubilee'	silvery grey
Podocarpus lawrencei (forms)	Mountain Plum Pine	grey green
Prionotes cerinthoides	Climbing Heath	red new growth
Trochocarpa species (most)	Purpleberries	coloured new growth

Leaf colour (continued)

EUCALYPTS

Eucalyptus cordata	Silver Gum	silvery grey
delegatensis	Gum-topped Stringybark	reddish older leaves
globulus	Tasmanian Blue Gum	silvery new growth
gunnii	Cider Gum	silvery younger foliage
morrisbyi	Morrisby's Gum	grey green
perriniana	Spinning Gum	silvery grey
risdonii	Risdon Peppermint	silvery grey
sieberi	Tasmanian Ironbark	orangey new growth
tenuiramis	Silver Peppermint	silvery grey-green

Note: The new growth on many of the Eucalypts is coloured to some degree, and on a large scale such as a forest setting can look excellent. With this in mind, I encourage you to plant forests; you'll be doing your bit for global warming and you'll really appreciate the new growth in spring! (*Buy foliage now.....it is essential for your existence!!!.....*)

Leaf shape

From tiny, rounded leaves, to needle-like shapes to long strap-leaves, the variety of shapes and sizes is huge, not to mention the angle at which they are affixed to the stems. Some leaves are curved, with rolled margins or undulating surfaces. This will effect the way the light reflects off the surface. The following is a selection of Tasmanian plants covering a range of leaf shapes, (or in some cases, stems).

Aciphylla procumbens	Mountain Celery	carrot-like
Amperia xiphioclada	Weavers Plant	long, arching, bumpy, dark green
Anopterus glandulosa	Native Laurel	large, glossy, curved, some serration
Baloskion tetraphyllum	Tassel Cordrush	long, grass-like, segmented, bright green
Banksia serrata	Sawleaf Banksia	large, serrated
Bracteantha bracteata	Golden Everlasting	soft, large-ish, floppy
Bossiaea riparia	River Bossiaea	flattened, stem-like
Carpobrotus rossii	Pigface	succulent, three-sided, small-finger sized
Daviesia latifolia	Bitter Hop Pea	undulating, oval-ish, large
Diplarrena moraea	White Flag Iris	strap-like, long, arching
Dracophyllum minimum	Heath Cushionplant	tiny, presented as a tight cushion
Epacris species	Heaths	smallish, tough, often pointed, often sharp
Hakea species	Hakeas	needle shaped, often arching, some sharp
Lomatia tinctoria	Guitar Plant	fern-like (some are Celerytop-Pine-like!)
Nothofagus gunnii	Fagus	fan-shaped, neatly wrinkled
Ozothamnus ledifolius	Mountain Spice	glossy, rounded, neatly presented
Ozothamnus scutelifolius	Scaleleaf Busheverlasting	small, rounded, pressed to stems
Platylobium obtusangulum	Common Flatpea	arrowhead-shaped
Poa species	Tussock Grasses	grasslike, long, arching
Pultenaea pedunculata	Matted Bushpea	short, soft, needle-shaped
Richea pandanifolia	Pandani	long arching, tapering, prominent midrib

Having arrived at this point, I'm beginning to see that this topic is huge! There is so much variety, and so many differences between plants. Each individual leaf has a colour, a shape, a degree of hairyness, an angle it affixes to the stems, a certain distance from the next leaf, and so on and so on. It all adds up to give an impression of foliage on that plant. Wonderful!

And now for an item I've never covered before in our newsletters, and I do apologise if it causes unrest.

SALE OF NURSERY

As you may have heard, Plants of Tasmania Nursery is on the market, and I am hoping to find a new enthusiastic owner to take on this very satisfying business. After 17 years, I feel the need to move on (the new bonsai nursery beckons) and let someone else have a go for the next 17!

Plants of Tasmania has been a great project. It has been a very rewarding experience to convert a gorse infested paddock in 1990 into a repository for the largest nursery-range of Tasmanian plants available, and to introduce these plants to the public and have them available for your gardens. It is a privilege to work in a job that delights and inspires people, and I thank you all for your patronage over the years. It has also been tremendous to work with wonderful, committed staff.

If you know of someone who might be contemplating a seachange (trees-in-pots change?), and would like a rewarding, out-doorsy, fresh air, great-staff type of business, please let them know. The nursery does sit on three titles, so an investment in the land (as well as the business), is part of the package. Interested parties could contact me, firstly for an overview, and if still interested, I can direct them to my agent.

However, in the meantime, Plants of Tasmania will continue to run exactly as it always has, and we will continue to strive to supply quality plants and sound advice as usual!

And that's your leafy lot for the day, or should I say

.....buy more foliage.....it is essential for your existence!!!.....

but I won't, because that smacks of insincere, opportunist advertising, and that's just so yesterday!

We look forward to seeing you when next you drop by, and I'll just reiterate that the plants are looking excellent this season, and it's an ideal time to plant, in most situations.

We trust that the rest of your autumn is of a crisp, smoke free clarity, and your winter - a cosy firesided hot soup and crusty fresh bread type of season.

Horticulturally yours,

Will Fletcher, and myriads of wonderful staff - **Peter, Linda, Paulette, Sam, Lydia, Qug and Karen.**