

NEWSLETTER

PLANTS OF TASMANIA

Nursery and Gardens

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Hello, and welcome to the spring newsletter for 2011!

News from the Nursery

We are madly propagating at the moment, with many thousands of new cuttings putting their roots out and seedlings popping their heads up above the propagating mix. It is always an exciting time, as we experiment with seed from new species – sometimes they work, and sometimes we understand why we've never grown them before... New plants should start being put out into the sales area soon – fresh-faced little things ready to pop into the ground! We have recently purchased a further block of land from the ex-neighbours Jubilee Nursery, now sadly closed, that will give us a lot more flexibility and the ability to grow and store more plants.

As mentioned last newsletter we have done some major revamping in the garden. A lot of work by all the staff has led to a much more open garden with a lovely *Westringia brevifolia* hedge (well, it will be a hedge when it grows a bit), another *Micrantheum hexandrum* Cream Cascade hedge-to-be, lots of Correas, Lomatias and Baueras. Where we sell a few forms of a particular species we have tried to plant examples of each so that we can show you what they are like. I've just noticed that our Yellow Waratah in the garden is in bud, so drop in soon to see this spectacular plant.

New Plants

We are always on the lookout for new plants – here are some that are either new to the nursery (or will be available soon), or have been absent for a long time.

***Vittadinia cuneata* – Fuzzy New Holland Daisy.** A rare daisy from the Tasmanian midlands with hairy grey-green leaves to 20 cm and small purple and yellow flowers. Good for dry conditions. We had this years ago, but it will be available again soon.

***Barbarea australis* – Riverbed Watercress.** A rare member of the Brassicaceae family (think broccoli and cauliflowers) endemic to Tasmania. This fast-growing leafy green grows to about 30 cm, but then has a long flower stem with yellow flowers. The leaves are edible, being deliciously peppery to the taste. Plant this in your vegie garden as another thing to add to salads, but pinch out flower spikes so they don't run to seed. Let's start a new industry! Available soon.

***Viminaria juncea* – Golden Spray.** Another particularly rare plant in Tasmania, though widespread on the mainland. The only Tassie location is on the margins of Moulting Lagoon near Freycinet National Park. It grows to a large shrub or small tree, and has yellow pea flowers. Prefers moist conditions

***Hovea corrickiae* – Glossy Purplepea.** Rare in Tasmania, but also grows on the mainland. A slender shrub or small tree of NE Tasmania with glossy leaves and attractive purple-lined white flowers. Prefers damper conditions (sites that it grows in Tasmania include German Town near St Mary's and near St Columba's Falls, both of which get just a bit of rain).

***Thysanotus patersonii* – Twining Fringelily.** We have 100 or so of these most delicate twining climbers pricked out, and with a bit of luck they'll grow up to sellable size. They grow to a metre, and have beautiful fringed, purple lily flowers, and we haven't had them for ages. Again, rare in Tasmania, but also grows on the mainland. Grow them next to your Blue Love-creepers – on second thoughts, maybe not, as each deserves its own place.

***Ozothamnus* species** – we've had a bit of a fixation with *Ozothamnuses* (if that is the plural) this spring, and are trying to grow some new species – *O. expansifolius*, *O. turbinata*, *O. purpurescens*, *O. thyrisoides*, *O. reflexifolius*, *O. costatifructus*, *O. antennaria* and maybe a few more. There are *Ozothamni* here for all situations from mountains to the coast, so come in and see what we have succeeded with. We will have good numbers of yellow-flowered, delicately scented *Ozothamnus obcordatus* (one common name is Native Thyme).

***Hookerochloa hookeriana* – Swamp Fescue.** This used to be in the genus *Austrofestuca*, but has had a name change. A good grass for damp and swampy areas that forms bright green tussocks to 0.3 m with nodding flowerheads to 0.9 m.

We should also have a few of the things mentioned in the previous newsletter, including the cushion plant *Abrontanella forsteroides*, soon. We've got some other things in the pipeline as well that came from a few collecting trips into the far north east. We'll see how these plants – mainly *Correas* - scrub up this summer and have the best into the system next year. Watch this space.

New decorations and other things in the shop

Come up to the nursery to see our new decorations: beautiful canvas prints about 70 x 40 cm of Tasmanian orchids by local artist Deb Wace. These prints are available for sale for \$350. We also have new lines of cards by Deb and Wolfgang Glowacki. Both series are very attractive and distinctively Tasmanian. We'll be getting a new book on birdscaping your garden soon, and the Launceston Field Nats' guide to Tassie plants is available again. Another new thing that we are stocking is weed mats, made from recycled fibre. These are designed for revegetation-type plantings, and allow water to penetrate but stop weeds growing. The mats sell for \$1 each.

Double and triple ferns

We have stock of double and triple-headed of Manferns at the moment, ranging from a small double about 30 cm high (\$25) up to a magnificent, near-symmetrical triple about 1.6 m high (\$350). Not all of these are out on display in sales – if you are interested in getting one of these unique and spectacular ferns, ask a staff member to see them. Go to <http://www.potn.com.au/triplemanfern.html> to see a photo of the big one.

Proteaceae (Part 1)

Which family to choose to highlight in this newsletter? Proteaceae – which contains Banksias, Grevilleas, Hakeas and many lesser-known genera – is a favourite of many gardeners (and me), and therefore a good choice! One of the reasons I chose it for this newsletter is to highlight the variety of forms we have of some species.

Members of the Proteaceae come from southern South Africa (think Proteas) and southern South America (for example Embothriums, which are like waratahs), but are most abundant in Australia. There is a strong Gondwanan connection – all these places were once joined to Antarctica, and there were probably continuous plant distributions across this ancient super-continent. Since the break-up of Gondwana maybe 35 million years ago there has been evolution of the genera and species we see today in each of the now-isolated continents.

There are literally thousands of species of Proteaceae on mainland Australia, with many Grevilleas and Banksias in particular very well known in cultivation. New species are still being discovered, but not in Tasmania (though you never know what is hidden out in the bush). What we do have, however, is a plethora of forms of some species that provide a lot of variety. So, here I'll talk about our Banksias, Grevilleas and Lomatias. Next newsletter I'll get on to some of the other genera, including the strange collection we have in the state's SW.

There are only two species of Banksia in Tasmania: ***Banksia serrata*** (Saw Banksia), which is best known from Sisters Beach in the NW but also grows in the hills to the south of the Bass Hwy and on Flinders Island (and extensively on the mainland), and ***Banksia marginata***, which is widespread both in Tasmania (sea-level to 1100 m at Mt Field) and in SE Australia. ***Banksia serrata*** only comes in one form in Tasmania (which we stock), but we sell four different forms of ***Banksia marginata***. The 'normal' form grows into a tall shrub or small

tree up to about 5 m high in good conditions. While the flower colour is quite consistent, flowerheads range markedly in size. We have also selected other forms that we grow from cuttings; all forms flower in autumn, and are much loved by honeyeaters:

***Banksia marginata* Ridgeway Spread** – The local form that grows around the Ridgeway area grows to 2 m high by 3 m wide, and has an attractive open structure and relatively large flowerheads that stand erect from the spreading branches.

***Banksia marginata* Coastal Spread** – A low spreading shrub to 1 m high by 2 m wide. This is a slow-growing form that originally came from the Tasmania's east coast.

***Banksia marginata* Coles Bay Compact** – This is a beautiful small-leaved form also from the east coast that grows to about 2 m and responds well to trimming. This form has a natural bonsai look, but still has good-sized yellow flowerheads.

We have even fewer species of *Grevillea* in Tasmania – just the one, ***Grevillea australis***. This species also grows in the high country of SE Australia, and is typically, but not always, found at higher altitude in Tasmania. It is widespread on the central plateau, but also grows naturally round Launceston, in the hills behind Bicheno and a few other places. The flowers of many *Grevilleas* are, of course, large and highly coloured. ***Grevillea australis*** is one of a group that has small, white flowers that are pollinated by bees and butterflies, rather than birds. However, what Tasmania lacks in the number of species and gaudy flowers it makes up in a range of different leaf and growth forms. We grow at least six in the nursery, with another one undergoing trials at the moment. They are all tough and attractive plants that look good in any garden,

***Grevillea australis* Prostrate Form** – This is a hardy alpine form that grows to 30 cm high and spreads to 1.5 m. The abundant flowers that appear in spring are delightfully aromatic, and the leaves are narrow and pointed. This form will cascade happily down a rock wall.

***Grevillea australis* Spreading Form** – We grow two spreading forms, which we prosaically label Spreading Form 1 and Spreading Form 2. Perhaps we should have a competition to rename them. These are vigorous spreading shrubs to 60 -100 cm high by 1.5 – 2 m high that go well in public plantings and other high-traffic areas. Form 1 is lower, growing to 60 cm, while Form 2 will reach 80-100 cm.

***Grevillea australis* Hollybank** – This form came from Hollybank Reserve, near Launceston. It is a soft-foliaged tall shrub that grows to 2 m with relatively small, more or less oval shaped leaves.

***Grevillea australis* Upright Large Flowered Form** – This form originally came from the Huon River, though similar plants occur on the Swan River near Bicheno. It has longer, narrow, but not stiff leaves, and also grows to about 2 m. As its name suggests it has larger flowers than the other forms.

***Grevillea australis* Upright Form** – This form also grows to 2 m, but has much finer leaves and masses of small flowers in spring.

I'll put a few photos of different forms up at www.potn.com.au/grevilleaaustralis.html.

The third genus discussed here is **Lomatia**. This is a much smaller and less well-known genus, with only 12 species described. They occur naturally in SE Australia and, to illustrate my earlier point, Chile. Tasmania has three species, including a widespread and common woodland species and one of the rarest plants in the world. The latter is ***Lomatia tasmanica***, or Kings Holly, which grows at one site in the SW. It has glossy, holly-like leaves and red flowers, but the plants there do not set seed and all the plants are clones. It is very difficult to propagate, and we (unfortunately) don't grow it. The other species are a bit easier, and we grow quite a few forms.

***Lomatia tinctoria* Guitar Plant** – The typical form of this widespread plant has deeply divided leaves (a trait typical of many of the Proteaceae) and white, Grevillea-like flowers. It grows to about 1 m, and is hardy in most sites except poorly-drained areas.

***Lomatia tinctoria* Guitar Plant Superfine** – This form has even more deeply divided leaves and nearly looks like a fern. It also grows to 1 m and has creamy-white flowers.

***Lomatia tinctoria* Guitar Plant Longley Pink** – Unlike all the other forms, this one has very attractive pink flowers. It also grows to about a metre, and has deeply divided leaves. A special plant.

***Lomatia tinctoria* Tasman Peninsula Guitar Plant** – Plants in the heaths of Tasman Peninsula have leaves that are more toothed rather than deeply divided. The grass-green leaves are offset by white flowers on plants that grow to a metre. We have good examples of this striking plant in our garden and in the nursery proper. We also have a form that is not as large, growing to only 60-80 cm

I'll put some photos of these as well up at www.potn.com.au/lomatiatinctoria.html

The last species is ***Lomatia polymorpha* Mountain Lomatia**, which is an erect shrub that grows to 1.5 m and prefers damper areas. It has sprays of creamy white flowers in spring. 'Polymorpha' implies that it comes in many forms, and the leaves can be entire (no toothing) or deeply divided. Choose the form you like best!

We also grow a natural cross between ***Lomatia tinctoria*** and ***Lomatia polymorpha***, which we call **Lomatia Polycross**. This is a very variable shrub, but generally grows to 1.5 m. Considering that both its parents have variable leaf-shape, the range in the cross is dramatic. Like most hybrids, this plant grows a bit more vigorously than its parents.

And an old list from Will

I happened to come across this old list from Will Fletcher's days at the nursery this morning. It is always worth revisiting lists like these to remind us to use native Tassie plants wherever possible to do good things for the local wildlife, and to prevent garden plants becoming weeds in the bush

Weedy Australian	Possible Tasmanian Substitute
<i>Acacia</i> species	<i>Acacia riceana</i>
	<i>Acacia mucronata</i> (esp. East Coast forms)
	<i>Acacia sophorae</i>
	<i>Acacia terminalis</i>
<i>Grevillea</i> species	<i>Grevillea australis</i>
	<i>Hakea epiglottis</i>
	<i>Hakea megadenia</i>
	<i>Hakea teretifolia</i>
<i>Kunzea ambigua</i>	<i>Leptospermum scoparium</i> var <i>eximeum</i>
<i>Kunzea ericifolia</i>	<i>Melaleuca pustulata</i>
<i>Leptospermum laevigatum</i>	<i>Leptospermum grandiflorum</i>
	<i>Leptospermum glaucescens</i>
<i>Paraserianthes (Albizia) lophantha</i>	<i>Acacia sophorae</i>
	<i>Acacia terminalis</i>
<i>Pittosporum undulatum</i>	<i>Pittosporum bicolor</i>
	<i>Myoporum insulare</i>
<i>Sollya heterophylla</i>	<i>Billardiera longiflora</i>

The sharp-eyed amongst you will have noticed that there are two Tasmanian natives in the weedy column. We don't grow *Leptospermum laevigatum* as it such a problem, and with *Kunzea ambigua* we try to tell people not to grow it near bush areas.

That's about all from us this Spring – come up and visit us sometime soon! We're always happy to have a chat about our interesting, varied and in some cases tasty plants!

John, Linda, Pete, Sam, Qug, Karen and Jonno