

*Hakea fraseri*

# Australian Plants Society

Armidale & District Group

PO Box 735 ARMIDALE NSW 2350

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**President:**

John Nevin – 6775 2128 (H)

**Secretary:**

Kristine Gow

**Treasurer:**

Phillip Rose – 6775 3767 (H)

## President's Message

Well, another Christmas/New Year period is behind us and a fresh year stretches ahead. Seasonal conditions have certainly taken a turn for the better. We went away for three weeks in January to the ASGAP meeting in Tasmania.

It had not rained for nearly a month, the weather was hot and dry, dams low, tanks half full and plants were struggling. We returned to find we had had ten inches of rain in two weeks, the dam and tank were full and the ground saturated.

ASGAP was a most enjoyable function ably hosted by Tasmanian ASGAP members. It was great to renew friendships with fellow plant enthusiasts from all over Australia.

A great exposition of the endemic flora was seen on the pre and post conference tours with the local experts on hand to show us the best areas and to assist with identifying the various species. We even had a heavy January snowfall at Cradle Mountain..

Anyone who has not been to an AGAP meeting should try to get to them. The next meeting is in Western Australia in September 2005, with three field trips based at Jurien Bay, Albany and Meredin. I am looking forward to it and trust discounted airfares are still about in two years time.

Next Tuesday is our Annual General Meeting. Please make yourself available to help on the committee. It is the combined effort of all, that makes the plant society what it is, enjoying our plants together.

*John*

## Another Web Site

<http://csu.edu.au/herbarium/> This is a virtual herbarium developed by the School of Environmental and Information Sciences at Charles Sturt University's Thurgoona campus. This is a great reference of more than 3400 specimens of plants from across the Murray-Darling Basin.

**CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS NEWSLETTER ARE GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED at ANY TIME**

Postal address as above or email – [jnevin@northnet.com.au](mailto:jnevin@northnet.com.au)

## GROUP INFORMATION

*(group commenced August 1977)*

We are a very friendly and helpful group who enjoy monthly meetings, garden visits and field trips to help members to enjoy the search for knowledge about our native flora. Most of all we range from raw beginners to others who have been at the game for many years - all willing to share their knowledge.

**General Meetings** are held at 7.30pm on the third Tuesday of each month (except December, January, June and July) at The Tree Group Woodland Centre where a display of flowers is presented by members.

Old and new members and visitors are very welcome to these meetings and any outings that we organise.

**Committee Meetings** are held on the first Monday of the month at 7.30pm – see diary for where - members are welcome to these meetings too.

**Annual General Meeting** is held in February.

**Solstice Dinner** is held in June.

**Wattle Day Dinner** is held on 1 September.

**December Meeting** is taken up by an end of year function, usually a BBQ or picnic.

*Cover: Background is adapted from a drawing of Hakea fraseri in Forest Flora, NSW*

## YOU MISSED IT!

A really wonderful ASGAP Conference in Tasmania with great people showing off their wonderful flora and scenery. A chance to meet up with like-minded people once again. Don't worry – you can now start preparing for the next one in Perth WA in 2005 ( WWW or West's Wonderful Wildflowers). The Pre-Conference tour starts on 26 September, Conference 1 October and Post-Conference tour on 8 October. I will remind you as we get closer because they are just asking for expressions of interest at the moment. Mail requests for more information to ASGAP Conference Secretary, PO Box 64, Nedlands WA 6909.

## ARMIDALE BI-CENTENNIAL ARBORETUM REPORT 2003

by Pat Urbonas – Arboretum Co-ordinator

During 2003, members continued to develop and maintain the native plant section of the arboretum.

Even though there were only 4 working bees, they were well attended. Thanks to R Boyd, P Brown, W Blackert, V Ford, J & B Nevin, S Robertson and P Urbonas.

Members spent a total of 37 hours on planting, watering, weeding and pruning. This year a Volunteer Risk Assessment was carried out between Mr Phil Brown, Physical Amenities Manager and myself. We will be required to conform to this assessment.

Expenditure (plants) for year - \$726.00

Number of plants - 142

*Thank you Pat for this organization during the year.*

**NB** Please read your label so that you can keep up with when your subscriptions are due. If there is a red dot here you need to renew your membership ASAP.

*Acacia diphylla* (meaning two types of foliage)

The seeds of this local wattle are very attractive to King Parrots during December, as the pods ripen. It is a small tree or tall shrub (4-12 metres tall) that occurs around the gorge country, east of Armidale. The plants become covered with pale yellow rod flowers in late spring. It is very hardy and suitable for the larger garden being an attractive plant even when not in flower. Propagate from seeds and perhaps cuttings.

**Some Flowering Plants during December 2003.**

Wattles in flower now: *A. subulata*, *A. implexa* and *A. o'shanesii*. Melaleucas in flower: *M. alternifolia*, *M. erubescens*, *M. huegelii* and *M. hypericifolia* "Ulladulla Beacon". *Pandorea jasminoides* is flowering profusely. This vigorous vine needs a sheltered position. The blue, pink and white forms of *Sollya heterophylla* are all flowering. *Hibbertia aspera* is putting on a second flush of flowers after spring. All forms of *Myoporum parvifolium* are putting on a great floral display.

*Acacia o'shanesii*

This species has bipinnate foliage and is similar in appearance to *Acacia decurrens* and *Acacia filicifolia*. *Acacia o'shanesii* grows into a tall shrub. Our specimen is about seven years old and has reached a height of four metres. Masses of bright yellow flowers appear in spring. *Acacia o'shanesii* will also flower sporadically at other times. The species occurs on the north and central coasts and extends into Queensland. We have observed the species in Strickland State Forest near Gosford. This is a very useful wattle because of its habit of flowering profusely out of season.

**Ceramic Pots-All Colours, Shapes And Sizes.**

Over the past few years we have made many visits to our favourite pot shop, "The Old Pot Factory", not far along the Mittagong turnoff (old Hume Highway) from the Freeway. There are many wonderful pots, all shapes, sizes and colours. We are attracted to their good value, discounted items and often walk out weighed down by another ceramic masterpiece for the garden. Well worth a visit if you're in the Southern Highlands.

*Leptospermum spectabile.*

This beautiful Teatree is classified as rare because it has limited distribution, in the wild. *Leptospermum spectabile* is found along the Colo River east of the Putty Road. It is a medium shrub with narrow, light green leaves. Eye-catching, large dark red flowers appear in spring.

As far as we know, this species is one of the parents of a range of hybrid tea trees. "Aphrodite", "Rudolph" and "Love Affair" all have some characteristics of *Leptospermum spectabile* but none have red flowers.

We have a number of "Aphrodite" hybrids in the garden and they have proved to be hardy and free flowering. For some time we have been searching for *Leptospermum spectabile*. At the Armidale markets in December our quest was successful and we bought a number of healthy specimens from one of the plant stalls.

The species should propagate readily from cuttings so in the future this beautiful tea tree should proliferate in our garden.

## CHRISTMAS FUNCTION 2003 by Pat Urbonas

The day turned out dry, overcast and pleasant after several days of wonderful rain. Members had morning tea at the home of Phil and Julia Rose before driving a short distance to Yina Nature Reserve. The reserve is an endangered Ecological Community for New England Peppermint ( *Euc. nova anglica*) Woodland on Basalts and Sediments in the New England Bioregion.

A feature of this woodland was the low numbers of shrubs, the area dominated by grasses and herbs, such as Vanilla Lilly (*Arthropodium*), Golden Star (*Hypoxis*), Grass rush (*Luzula*), 3 species of Matrush (*Lomandra*), Common Everlasting (*Chrysocephalum*), bluebells (*Wahlenbergia*), Trigger plant (*Stylidium*). Tick Trefoil (*Desmodium*), False Sarsparilla (*Hardenbergia*), Lotus, Small-leaved Bush-Pea (*Pultenea*), 2 or 3 species of Goodenia, Austral Bugal (*Ajuga*), mint (*Mentha*), Slender Violet Bush (*Hybanthus*), native violets, urn Heath (*Melichrus*) and Bulbine bulbosa. These are just some of the woodland plants we identified but I have excluded grasses (poaceae family).

John Nevin and Warren Sheather found a rare species of cassinia (to be confirmed) that has only previously been found at two sites around the New England National Park area.

We went back to the Rose's home for lunch, wine and a lovely fresh fruit salad topped with ice cream! After lunch we walked around the existing garden and several new areas that Phil has developed and planted out.

Members were intrigued by a small bale of hay partially immersed in a pond. This apparently prevents the build up of algae.

After the garden walk, the Rose's took us up to the original homestead to view a cherry packing shed cladded with kerosene tins, hand nails and timber slats. Back in the cars we then headed off to the portion of fenced land adjacent to Yina Reserve to bag seed pods of *acacia gunnii* with nylon stocking. Unfortunately, there were no seedpods to be found. However, Barbara Nevin came away with 2 large stumps to decorate her developing bog garden.

Back to the Rose's home for late afternoon tea and the stayers got home about 7pm. A great day was had by all and big thanks to Phil and Julia for hosting this year's function. Those enjoying another great Christmas function were B & J McCaig, C & G Mulquinney, S Robertson, K Wray, B & J Nevin, G & W Sheather and P Urbonas.

*Phil while in Tasmania I mentioned your bale of hay and those listening said to be careful because if the hay rots too much it can cause increased nutrients in your pond and the algae will grow. Ed!*

### Request for Prostanthera staurophylla, pink form.

Are any members still growing this plant that the group originally collected at Torrington many years ago. The plant is/was all pink in colour and at the time was known as *P. teretifolia*. The current colour form from Mole Station is pink in bud but then opens white (very nice also). If you can help with cutting material please contact Pat Urbonas or Sarah Caldwell at Mole Station Nursery.

## PCYC SUNDAY MARKETS 2003 by Pat Urbonas – Co-ordinator

The society maintained its presence at the markets during 2003 on 10 occasions.

We exhibited cuttings of flowering plants, gave advice on all aspects of Australian plants, gave out free brochures and sold plants and books.

Our presence has become well known, with many members of the public being regular lookers and buyers. Profits from plant sales have funded those plants we plant in the arboretum.

Thanks to the following members for their assistance on Sunday mornings:- M Flint, K Gow, N Hobbs, J Kippin, G Fairweather, C Mulquinney, P Rose and P Urbonas.

*We thank Pat for his effort with this monthly event.*

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 17 February 2004

It is that time again so please come to the February meeting to nominate or be nominated for a position in running our group. Most groups struggle to fill these positions so your help is needed to keep our group fresh and vibrant in 2004. Contact one of the present committee to express your interest so that you can be nominated for the meeting. Some of the current committee are due to finish their stint and would love to hear from interested members.

Look at the following positions to see where you can fit in and talk to someone in the committee about the position you are interested in.

President  
Vice president (2)  
Secretary  
Treasurer  
Membership Officer  
Auditor  
Supper Coordinator  
Environmental Officer

Occupational, Health & Safety Officer  
Seed Bank Liaison Officer  
Visitor Welcomer  
Publicity Officer  
Newsletter Editor  
Newsletter Printer  
Newsletter Compiler & Dispatcher

### Things you learn

Whilst on these ASGAP trips I find that whilst listening to all those experts you can get such a lot of tips for making our lives easier in the quest for new plants, etc.

**The Bag Propagation System** – Get a thick clear Snap- lock bag. Add 1/3 part damp potting mix, put in cuttings, blow up with breath ( repeat if necessary). Good for hard cuttings such as epacris. Pack bags into a box and place in a well-lit place – not hot. A good mix is 1/3 sand, 1/3 perlite and 1/3 coco peat. – from Mark Geaves (Tasmania) – Wouldn't that be good for when out on field trips so that we can get cuttings home safely without refrigeration!

**Growing Christmas Bells** – Plant in a mixture of 50/50 peat and sand. in a deep pot with a dish under it. Water every day with fresh water – from Tamara Cox (Sydney)

**Book Review in Growing Australian –  
Australian Plant Society Victoria  
December journal**

***Habitat Garden – attracting wildlife to  
your garden***

Peter Grant, ABC Publ. 2003 Syd.

Soft cover, 94 pages,

Members Price \$21.00 (plus postage) {perhaps this is  
only for Victorian members}

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What great timing for a great title on a subject where  
interest is expanding so rapidly.

With several years of severe drought, water reserves  
at their lowest ever, temperatures at all time highs,  
the Murray Darling with serious flow problems, to  
say nothing of the nation-wide, creeping, insidious  
salinity problems – a bleak picture if we want to  
dwell on it.

The responses and reactions to such doom and gloom  
possibilities indicate the alternative thinking and  
planning of individuals, groups, businesses and even  
governments to face the very real challenges ahead.  
Peter Grant with his book is one such response.

Gardening programs on radio, TV and the press are  
increasingly promoting much sounder attitudes to the  
ways we treat the land in which we live. Contributions  
of caring for the land can be made in small but  
sound ways on our own patch. This book has many  
practical approaches to the whys and hows of  
beginning a garden using many indigenous plants.

There are some useful charts indicting the benefits of  
plant groups in supporting a range of wildlife. A  
section on the collection of local plant seed and  
various methods of propagation and treatment is  
backed by suggestions of the most successful times  
for sowing and taking cuttings.

The daunting task of talking a new bare block is  
addressed with some practical suggestions that work.  
It is quite evident that the author has been faced  
with this situation and has worked out solutions. He  
constantly encourages the reader to observe how  
vegetation grows and is arranged in the wild and  
stresses the importance of establishing local species  
to provide maximum habitat for indigenous wildlife.

Many tables accompany the text which he has tried to  
make useful to the entire nation – a very difficult  
task, but where local Landcare are groups can give  
sound advice. Sound emphasis has been placed on

water usage and its conservation through the choice  
of appropriate plants and the use of mulches.

I was surprised to see the alternative lawn  
suggestions omitted perhaps the toughest and most  
adaptable grass for this use, *Microlaema stipoides*. I  
noted too in the first chart where the Weeping Grass  
is mentioned that it should be *Microlaema* and not  
*Erhartia* which is the invasive “Panic Veldt Grass”.

In the control of pest species of plants or animals a  
note of caution is advised which may encourage the  
gardener to think a little deeper of the consequences  
and reject the easy option and even accept some  
superficial damage so that the potential is thoroughly  
ascertained and maybe some kind of balance  
achieved.

A habitat garden with a cat is inviting destruction, no  
matter how well moggie is fed or how many bells are  
clamped around its neck. Remember the definition of  
a feral cat should be ‘one that steps off the verandah’!

Gardens will be constantly changing as the  
environmental conditions and requirements alter.  
Various habitats, their protection, and food sources  
are all included in discussions. Feeding of wildlife,  
nectar bottles, seed trays and the provision of nest  
boxes receive attention and the detrimental sides of  
this ‘goodwill’ are presented. The smaller creatures,  
that are so vital in establishing an ecological balance,  
such as the invertebrates – spiders, dragonflies,  
butterflies, ants etc, are all considered. Lists of plants  
are suggested to provide for their needs.

Water gardening is explored with the appropriate  
approach to maintaining wildlife. A range of water  
loving plants are listed as are those that like wet feet  
but not constant immersion.

The final chapters deal with difficult areas to  
establish habitat, such as rain forest, alpine, arid and  
coastal sites. Help and advice is at hand once the  
decision is made to pick up the shovel and examples  
and contacts are discussed in this section.

The softback publication is a very practical guide to  
improving the biodiversity in gardens and throughout  
the pictorial sections is the constant inclusion of  
children exploring and discovering. This would be  
one of the most rewarding aspects of such  
endeavours and has the potential to unlock a lifetime  
of interest and awareness of future generations.

Well done Peter Grant! Highly recommended,  
- by Trevor Blake