

North West Group

Newsletter 465

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Welcome to the January edition, the first for 2024 of the APSTNW newsletter.

From all the committee we hope the End of Year and New Year's celebrations were full of joy, love and maybe some nature appreciation time for yourself.

There will not be a meeting this month; but propagation will be on as normal. February meeting will be the Annual General Meeting.

'Come and see my garden' featuring members gardens will be back this year.

If you have any suggestions for additions to the newsletter or the plant group in general please share them with one of the committee, general members or myself, Simon.

Monthly meeting:

There is no meeting in January and the February meeting will be the **AGM**. This will be held on **Tuesday 20th February** at the East Devonport Tennis Club 48 Wright St starting at **7:30pm sharp**. Please save the date to come along and help guide the direction of your group.

PROPAGATION AT THE ARBORETUM:

Words from the President.

As the propagation coordinator for the North West group I wish to thank all those who have faithfully attended our monthly propagation sessions at the Tasmanian Arboretum. I especially want to thank Marianne and Bradley for cleaning the glasshouse from years of accumulated moss and algae. It looks like new, and our cuttings are receiving better light. All other members have made great contributions. It is rewarding and enjoyable to work with plants, taking cuttings and potting them on. It is the best way to learn to recognise plants and learn the often cumbersome botanical names. Unfortunately the use of botanical names is necessary, as that is the only way to have accurate names that are consistent throughout the botanical literature. Many Australian native plants actually do not have common names. Those who come to work in our propagation sessions often can take home plants that we have in excess. Our policy has been to give plants to members, so we can ensure they are grown locally and when grown, become a source of cutting material for our nursery.

Thanks to encouragement by John Tabor, who has gained access to many less common Tasmanian plants, we have continued to expand our range of Tasmanian endemic plants. This has become more important, since commercial nurseries specialising in Tasmanian species have been closing down. The principle of "preservation by cultivation" is important, as growing rare and endangered plants in our gardens can help to ensure they will not be lost permanently.

The past year has been an eventful. Our rent for the use of the nursery owned by the Arboretum was doubled. Our endeavours to achieve greater collaboration with the Arboretum staff have had varying success. In light of greater expenses, we may need to consider increasing the price of our plants at our sales. Five dollars per one litre pot is very cheap for many of our plants that are uncommon. My view has always been that we need not aim for great profit, only to cover our expenses. Our main goal is to promote Australian native plants. So decision will need to be made at the February AGM on the pricing of our plants.

Please note that, although there will not be any evening meeting in January, we will have a PROPAGATION session on the usual date starting at 10am. This will be on Thursday the 18th of January. January is best time of the year for many plants to take cuttings from matured spring growth.

Riitta B.

This is a hands on session helping, learning all about growing native plants from cuttings. It's a BYO lunch/drinks affair at The Tasmanian Arboretum, 'usually' on the Thursday after the Tuesday meeting. If new please contact a committee member for latest information on dates and location.

December End of Year celebration for 2023

A lovely turn out of members and partners were warmly welcomed at the home of John T in Hawley Beach (Port Sorell) during December.

We were treated to a guided tour of John's incredible native garden. Some took the opportunity to pick John's brain on the growing needs of certain plants, while others were happy to stroll through the area, drink in hand, chatting with friends and just taking in the beautiful landscape John has created.



Tips, tricks and techniques were discussed, offers to share/exchange plants and cuttings were made and some challenges to grow plants from seed were set.



A delicious array of food bought by everyone was prepared and a lovely and healthy meal was enjoyed, again shared with good company.

After dinner all names were put into a hat and John drew out one lucky winner which was Jane. Jane received a copy of the book "growing gardens for native animals".

Everybody had a lovely evening and it was a fitting end to another year of pots, plants, propagation and providing the community with good quality, fair priced native plants. Everyone involved should feel good about the group.

Come and see my garden.

To start the year off I went and visited the stunning native garden of Ian H in Leith. Ian has kindly shared some words about his garden. Photos by Ian and myself.

Our property at Leith is on a coastal hillside, facing west into the teeth of the Roaring Forties, so lots of wind and salt! Although surrounded by red basalt soils, we are situated on a patch of grey sand which is free draining.

To preserve our main view to the west we had to stick to low bushes and groundcovers. Initially, we planted lots of grevilleas, callistemons and correas, all able to withstand the buffeting from the westerly winds. The basic rule was survival of the fittest - 2 or 3 heavy watering's during the first year to send roots down deep, no fertiliser and then the plants had to fend for themselves. Not surprisingly, we found that coastal species and West Australian natives did well in the sandy soil.

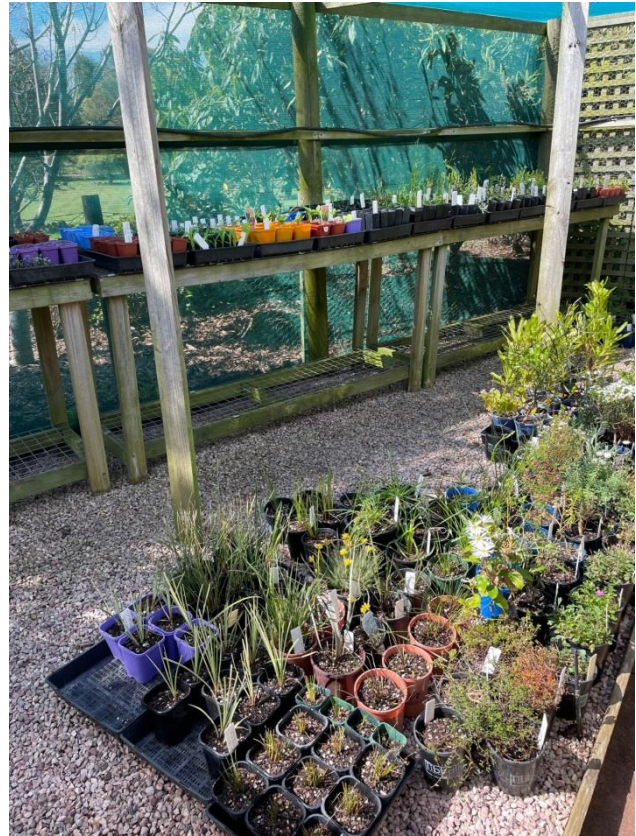


We imported truckloads of pine bark which has improved water retention. Years and years of mulching has gradually built up humus in the sandy soil, which plants have responded to.

More recently a wide variety of grass like plants such as kangaroo paw and lomandra became available in nurseries. These plants provided landscape variety and also the advantage of propagation through division, which has permitted economical mass plantings.



A visit to central Australia and especially the Arid Lands Desert Park and the Olive Pink garden in Alice Springs inspired a project to create a small 'pseudo-arid' section in our garden. Plants were selected from dryland or coastal habitats such as saltbush *Atriplex cinerea*, cushion bush *Leucophyta brownii*, rice flower *Pimelea ferruginea* and grey cottonheads *Conostylis candicans*. Plants were widely spaced to ensure they received maximum sunlight and to mimic the arid habitat. A thick covering of light-coloured fine gravel/coarse sand helped create the arid landscape illusion.



Propagation has created the means to plant more and more of the smaller natives such as patersonia, flag iris, chocolate lily, rock lily and billy buttons. We are experimenting with seed from WA suppliers and so far have had success with: everlastings *Rhodanthe chlorocephala*, showy everlasting *Schoenia filifolia*, pink cluster everlasting *Schoenia cassiniana*, and slender podolepis *Podolepis garcilis*. Of particular interest has been the propagation of *Conostylis* species and after much trial and error we now have several species (*aculeata*, *candicans*, *juncea*, *setigera*, *pauciflora*) growing from either seed, cuttings, division or layering.

This is an ongoing project. Ian H.



Upcoming 'not to be missed' events and dates:

Thursday 18th January:

Propagation session at the Tasmanian Arboretum starting at 10:00am until 2:00pm (or shorter time if that suits you better)

Any help is greatly appreciated, come and learn how to grow native plants.

Tuesday 20th February:

Annual General Meeting.
East Devonport Tennis Club

48 Wright Street East Devonport.

Arrive after 7:00pm for 7:30pm start.



Tid bits and left overs (or should that be recyclables):

Although not a native species, the propagation team found this nest with a baby Black bird and two eggs waiting to hatch at the Arboretum during the last propagation session.

Hooroo Simon 😊

