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Northern Group Newsletter January - February 2024

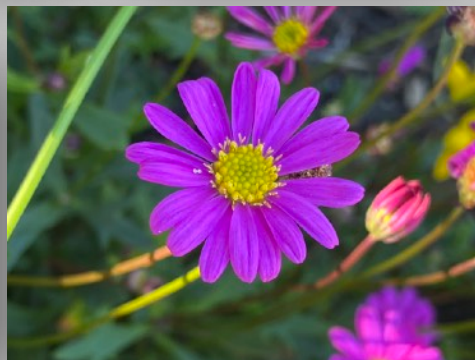
New Year celebrations have died down as has much of the colour in our gardens. Big displays of melaleucas, leptospermums, banksias, grevilleas, tetathecas, epacris etc. have subsided. The foliage features more strongly. Yet on a closer inspection there is an array of plants in flower, more subtle in impact but nevertheless they are on show.

At this Rosevears garden scaevolae, both pink and blue are humped tightly, their small flowers profuse and quite remarkable up close. A baeckea, species unknown, is breaking out over a path, doesn't respond to the heavy pruning each season, wilful in its desire to dominate its neighbours but is an attractive, useful filler in a vase.



Statuesque along part of the fence, *Anigozanthus* provide muted colour: canvas green, maroon or russet. The favourite, shy and less robust, is a beautiful golden yellow with red tips. By now the aged flowers sucked dry by wattlebirds, are dull, closed down with just an occasional dainty flower open and bright faced. Apart from the ayogynes no flowers really strike the eye or dominate - they just quietly form a whole garden palette.

One of the best is the unassuming brachyscome daisy. Spread around the garden it provides pockets of colour for much of the year. *Brachyscome multifida*, also known as the cut-leaf daisy, is perhaps the most common and each of these is a consistent performer in my garden. At their best in summer, they sprawl comfortably, fill in gaps with ladylike foliage and pert daisy faces. Below: *B. multifida* white, pink, blue and amethyst.



Other species are worthy of a place in our gardens i.e. *B. augustifolia* (far left), *B. diversifolia* var. *maritima* (centre) and the more common *B. formosa*, a striking magenta splash.

Brachyscome is a genus of about 90 – 100 species, most of which occur in Australia but some species are found in New Zealand and two occur in Papua. There are between 65 - 80 species in this genus e.g. *Brachyscome aculeata*, (hill daisy),

Brachyscome augustifolia, *Brachyscome basaltica*, (swamp daisy), *Brachyscome decipiens*, (field daisy), *Brachyscome dentata*, *Brachyscome graminea*, (stiff daisy, grassland daisy,) *Brachyscome iberidifolia*, (Swan River daisy), *Brachyscome multifida*, (cut-leaved daisy, rock daisy, Hawkesbury daisy), *Brachyscome nivalis*, (snow daisy), *Brachyscome scapigera*, (tufted daisy), *Brachyscome segmentos*, (Lord Howe daisy, mountain daisy).



B. multifida ^

B. diversifolia var. *maritima* >

B. multifida 'Amethyst' v



Brachyscomes are easy to grow reaching 30cm in height and spreading at least 30 cm - in the right sunny spot they will sprawl even further.

Flowers persist all year with the main flushes in spring and summer. A good prune at the end of summer keeps them at their best. They will propagate readily from cuttings or layering so it is easy to fill in gaps in the garden with this dainty faced member of the Asteraceae family.

Summer Excursions

Roy Skabo, keen to see numerous native plants during January, organised several day trips 'to do a bit of botanising in the alpine and sub-alpine areas near L'ton.'

Wednesday 3 January

Excursion to Weavers Creek, Mt Barrow Plains



A small group drove to the Nunamara store where they turned onto the the Discovery Trail to Mt. Barrow Plains described by Roy as 'an interesting sub-alpine open flat area with a variety of species'.

It was in this area in late November that the *Eucalyptus gunnii* seeds were collected for the Seed Bank and *Telopea truncata* was at its magnificent best.

This time *Comesperma retusum* (below) was at its striking best with a mass display of *Leptospermum lanigera* dotted around the edges of the 1000 m. high sedgeland.

Other species noted were *Gentianella* and *Baeckea*. A few striking blue *Thelymitra cyanea* (left) were also photographed by Louise.



< *Gentianella pleurogynoides* is an endemic species, found in isolated populations in wet alpine heathlands. It has no previous Natural Values Atlas recording for Mt Barrow plains area only from Ben Lomond and the Cradle Mt-Lake St Clair National Park region.

Photos:
< Roy S. Louise S. >

Comesperma retusum. >



Wednesday 10 January

Excursion Paradise Plains

Report: Roy Skabo

Paradise Plains is a very attractive area of sub-alpine heathland about a 70 km drive from Launceston. Newitts Creek runs through it and on both sides of the creek are gentle slopes covered with an interesting variety of grasses, sedges, shrubs and sphagnum moss. The flora of the Plains is not well documented, with the Natural Values Atlas showing only 35 native plant species for the area. A summer visit provided the opportunity to add to the list.



We parked where the creek runs under the road, which is more or less the northern boundary of the Plain and, after hoisting our backpacks, set off to the south, almost parallel to the creek and slightly uphill.

As is usual with our excursions the pace was slow; looking back after an hour or so we realised we had walked only about 400 m, but we had recorded dozens of native plant species, including many that were not on the list.



Numerous daisy species were noted including *Coronidium monticola* (above), a taxon fairly recently added to the Tasmanian Census of Vascular Plants. The parsley relative, *Trachymene humilis*, grew in profusion along the first part of the walk, interspersed with the tiny-leaved *Olearia algida*, *Epilobium billardioreanum* (below left), *Pappochroma bellidioides* and the smaller but superficially similar *Lagenophora montana*.



The only orchid we saw in flower was the impressive *Pterostylis decurva*, summer greenhood, but earlier in the year the beautiful *Diuris monticola*, golden moths was common. Stylidiums were also plentiful. Note the rarer white flower.



Several people also took photos of an ancient *Coprosma nitida* which we guessed must have been a hundred years old.

As midday approached we came to a vehicular track which I knew leads to the Paradise Plains Hut, built “unofficially” decades ago by hunters or bushwalkers. We decided to walk the kilometre or so to the hut and have lunch there.



Much of this track led through a delightful forest of huge *Leptospermum lanigerum* trees over a thin groundcover of mosses and lichens and and one extensive, thick patch of a large clubmoss, *Lycopodium fastigiatum*.



The hut itself is surrounded by a clearing which has become a marsupial lawn and is fairly clean and tidy. Some people borrowed chairs to sit on in the shade during lunch.

The return to the cars was quicker but still provided some interesting finds including an unusual exotic, *Erythranthe moschata* (formerly *Mimulus moschatus*), which was growing in running water in Newitts Creek.

NB. This was the same area visited last year when Ian Thomas led members on a popular excursion. This time it was a more favourable time for flowers.

The 19 January excursion to Ben Lomond was cancelled due to windy weather.

Nevertheless there has been plenty to engage members in the outdoors, and briskly so on the seed collecting trip to the Lake Augusta area when members first gathered at Liawenee at 10 am on 23rd January. Roy Skabo provided this report:

Tuesday, 23 January Seed Collecting Excursion to Lake Augusta Area

Our ongoing collaboration with Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens (RTBG) provides our members with the opportunity to enjoy days out in the field with expert botanists and to help with the collection of seeds for the Tas Seed Conservation Centre (TSCC).

In action collecting *Coprosma pumila* >

Our latest excursion was to the botanically interesting area around Lake Augusta in the central highlands to the west of Great Lake.

Our leaders were James Wood of the TSCC and Dave Marrison from the RTBG; our targets were a diverse range of species, many on the threatened species list. James and Dave had brought along a group of volunteers from the south of the state.

The morning was spent near Second Lagoon, where we searched for a tiny sedge

which has not yet been described and named. It goes by the temporary name *Carex algonquin rivulet*.

< We found it in profusion but unfortunately its seeds were not quite ready to collect.

Carex algonquin rivulet >





In the same area we made a small collection of seeds from two tiny *Ranunculus* species and finally we inspected a patch of a rare daisy species, < *Senecio extensus*, which I had never seen before. This was a few weeks from setting seed.

Another species of interest was a tiny *Stellaria* species discovered recently by one of the Hobart volunteers. It appears to be a completely new species as it does not fit the description for any known species of *Stellaria*.

After lunch we drove a few kilometres further west and parked beside the gravel road. Our target here was a tiny species of *Coprosma*, *C. pumila*, which has colonised the gravel verges of the road, having taken a liking to this man-made environment.

There were narrow strips of this species along both sides of the road stretching for over a kilometre.

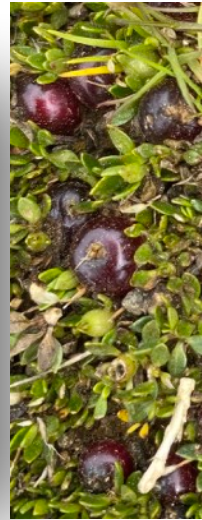
Like most coprosmas this one is dioecious i.e. having separate male and female plants. As a

result, about half the plants (the male ones) had no fruit but the female plants had pea-sized deep purple (almost black) fleshy fruit embedded amongst the tiny leaves.

Coprosma pumila >

At around 4 pm we parted from the southern volunteers, a very pleasant group of diverse ages and backgrounds, and made our way back to Launceston after a fascinating and pleasant but tiring day.

Seed collection in the wild is a tricky business because it is impossible to predict exactly when the seeds will be mature enough to harvest. Follow up trips took place on Wednesday 7th and Thursday 29th February.



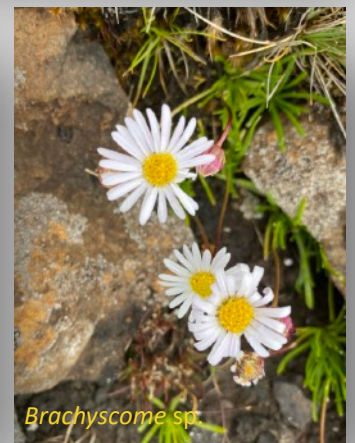
Richea gunnii, Double Lagoon



Senecio extensus



Xerochrysum subundulatum



Brachyscome sp

Follow up details from the seed collecting trip.

The carax seeds and *Senecio extensus* which had not been ready for harvesting on January 23 was collected two weeks later. NG members, Helen Tait and Claire Green joined James, David and the Hobart volunteers to help on this successful day.

Senecio extensus (subalpine fireweed) is a perennial herb that was only known in Tasmania from a single collection made in 1984 until confirmed in 2020 from two sites on a broad undulating area of dolerite-based sedgy plain surrounded by open shrubby subalpine forest at about 1,000 m a.s.l. The two Tasmanian sites are in one sub-population, the total area of occupancy less than 1 ha and the total number of mature individuals fewer than 250. (Excerpt from Tasmanian Threatened Species Notesheet)

While members were enjoying the numerous opportunities to admire the diverse range of native plants in the wild during the last of summer, the regular Northern group commitments continued.

Saturday 7 January, Propagation Windsor Park Nursery

This was well supported session with surprisingly good numbers for the January holiday period. There were lots of plants propagated - so many trays that the shade house is rapidly filling. Potting on was a major task necessary to move plants outside to the benches not just to free up space in the shade house but also to fill out the shelves to be ready for the autumn sale.

Over drinks at this session there was discussion about the nursery tasks that needed to be undertaken and Janet sought ideas and suggestions. This led to a meeting, held on Saturday 20 to further plan the new management team.

Monday 22 January Reserves Conservation Committee Meeting

The first meeting for the RCC was to plan for Cambridge Street in the new year. There was discussion on the meeting with City of Launceston Council to update them on progress at Cambridge St. Reserve and also talk about Carr Villa, possibly even to set up a 'Friends of Carr Villa Reserve'.

Tuesday, 23 January Working bee Tasmanian Native Garden, Caswell Street, Mowbray



This day was busy for those who were able to attend, a lesser number than usual. Weeds continue to pop up but fortunately are quite easily removed. A little pruning and mulching was done but more of the Council-delivered mulch remains to be spread.

It is good that the building/fencing work bordering the garden has finally ended. The garden is back to normal with not so much flower colour at this stage in summer but nevertheless attractive with contrasting foliage and form.

< The sun highlights arching grasses.

Thursday, 1 and Saturday, 3 February Working bees, Cambridge St. Reserve

These took place supported by the usual volunteers but conditions were not so pleasant this month with its windy, hot weather. As usual weeding was the main occupation to start the year.

Saturday, 3 February Propagation, Windsor Community Precinct

Janet's list of tasks was substantial for this crucial session to prepare plants for the autumn sale. Re-potting was the priority with an instruction sheet and demonstration given for those who wished to learn or freshen their skills. Some cuttings and potting-on were also done. It was a busy day with much achieved but not all was finished so several

generous members returned on Thursday, 15th to finish the re-potting by the end of February. This allows the sale plants sufficient time to settle and respond, ready for the April 27th sale.

Tuesday, 20 February AGM and General Business Meetings

Max Fry Hall, Trevallyn

The first meeting was the AGM, followed by a general meeting. Because all reports appear online prior to meetings the agenda was covered promptly. The elections of a new president, vice president and secretary were endorsed by the 38 members present. Roy Pallett, outgoing president, welcomed Dale Luck, president, Jeff Campbell, vice president and Karin Fiedler, business secretary. Rosemary Verbeeten continues in her role as treasurer and Noel Manning remains the minutes secretary. The appointees positions were filled except for those of the publicity officer and newsletter editor/Eucryphia liaison which were deferred. The office bearers and appointees reports were adopted including the treasurer's report.

Dale began the general meeting by thanking all retiring members for their commitment to their roles before members heard about the formation of a new nursery management team; discussion on increased plant prices; the acquisition of a defibrillator; and the possible declaration of Windsor Park as a botanical garden. Both latter matters are before the West Tamar Council.

Details of the New Nursery Team provided by Janet at the General meeting.

On January 20 an informal meeting was held with a team established and responsibilities allocated. Here is the new team: -

1. Nursery Manager and plant welfare – Janet
2. Assistant to Manager - Sharon
3. Sale organisation – Louise
4. Stocks – Julie with back-up from Fran and Janet
5. Labels and labelling – Helen and Roberta, backup Janet
6. Cleaning allocation (pots and labels) – Jill with backup from Rosemary WW.
7. Afternoon teas – Gilly, back-up from all members
8. Nursery's Tasmanian flora, overseeing diversity and numbers – Rosemary V (this is a new position reflecting our responsibilities in this area)
9. Infrastructure – Colin, Andrew, Roy P.

This will be a new Nursery Team to share the workload and improve what we do in this most worthwhile APST activity. Janet reminded us that it needs to be successful and to be prepared to help when asked by any of the team members. The future, the continued success of the nursery depends on it.

Plant of the Month Request for the roster

Members were asked to fill in the POM and Supper roster. Let Margaret Killen know if you wish to be included.



POM is open to all members. It is an informal time to share a little information about a plant that has in some way drawn your attention. It may be a little nerve wracking but we are a most accommodating bunch so with a picture or two, some notes with interesting points from internet research, your own experiences with the plant, your 5 minute presentation is a simple task. In addition another example of our wonderful native flora is, briefly yet simply, highlighted for members. New faces are particularly welcome as they bring new plant preferences to the meeting nights.

Supper was organised by Anna and Daphne with members enjoying a cheerful chat time over a well-laden table.

Tuesday, 27 February Tasmanian Native Garden, Caswell St. Mowbray



Another busy day with weeds being the focus, plus mulching which has become rather thin on some beds.

Grasses, greenery and *Pelargonium australe* - the garden is looking good, despite a lack of rain.





Plants That Please

Firstly Janet H. chose this pink callistemon as a pleasing addition to her garden at this time of the year. It begins the flowering period as this fresh pink colour, gradually fading through softer pink hues.



The distinctive feature of this cultivar is the large soft-pink inflorescences with yellow anthers.

Blooms fade to white as they age. This bottlebrush may be a cultivar of *Callistemon citrinus* and was developed by a Queensland nursery.

Photos: R. Skabo



^ *Melaleuca* or is it *Callistemon* 'Pink Champagne'? >

NOTE: "The genus, *Callistemon*, has been subject to recent taxonomic revision with early and recent botanists including Ferdinand von Mueller and Lyndley Craven (deceased in 2014) proposing to 'lump' the genus into *Melaleuca* and others.

Craven *et al.* (2014) published new species combinations which included the renaming of all *Callistemon* species to *Melaleuca*, based on evolutionary relationships and DNA evidence and other features. However, the NSW Herbarium advises that the *Callistemon* genus can still be used. [Info from Warren and Gloria Sheather. Editing and additional text by Dan Clarke" May 25, 2020. <https://resources.austplants.com.au/plant/callistemon-pink-champagne/>]

This decision has been very controversial and not all botanists are in agreement. The genus *Callistemon* has been retained by the state herbaria of NSW, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia but state/territory herbaria of Queensland, Tasmania, Northern Territory and the ACT include all *Callistemon* as *Melaleuca* species.

The most obvious difference between the two putative taxa is the arrangement of the stamens. In *Callistemon*, the stamens are simple and unbranched. In *Melaleuca*, stamens are fused together into bundles at the base, but free above, so look as if they are branching. (Department of Biological Sciences, Macquarie University)

For Janet, another plant that pleases is *Goodia lotifolia* an underrated garden plant which is lit up with deep-yellow pea flowers in October and has graceful trifoliate clover-like leaves, making it an attractive shrub to fill a garden corner.



Goodias respond to moist and shady sites. In dry sites in full sun they'll grow to about 1 metre, flower sparsely, and then many branches will die back and need to be removed before new shoots emerge.



Janet reported, 'In the wild, the best *Goodia* display she had seen was on the cool south side of Mt George near George Town. There the shrubs lined several downhill shallow water courses. They were 2 to 3 metres high and blooming profusely.'

Janet's shrub grows in a dappled-shade site and is watered occasionally. It is about 3 - 4 metres high, with no dieback - an attractive plant in every way.



Photo: J.Hallam

To conclude: - [list of members and responsibilities for this year](#)

Program Committee:

Roy Skabo, Janet Hallam and Ian Thomas (there is room for more volunteers here).

Reserves Committee:

Dale Luck, Ian Blayden, Jonty Dehnert, Lynne Mockridge, Kirstin Seaver, Louise Skabo, Roy Skabo, Andrew Smith, Helen Tait, Jo Boniface and Robert Worland.

Heritage Forest Garden Managers: Suzanne Talbot, Daphne and Peter Longman.

Nursery Manager: Janet Hallam heading and coordinating a team.

****Newsletter Editor and Eucryphia Liaison: Deferred.**

Excursions coordinators: Roy Skabo, David Waters and Ian Thomas.

State webmaster/IT/Systems: Margaret Killen, Karen Waldon-Manning and Andrew Smith.

Northern Group Webmaster: Karen Waldon-Manning.

****Publicity Officer: Vacant.**

Social media: Louise Skabo and David Waters.

Librarian: Catherine Pearce.

Supper coordinator: Margaret Killen.

Group Membership Liaison: Fiona Tilsley and Catherine Pearce.

State Council Representatives: Dale Luck and Ian Thomas with no official proxy.

Scaevola aemula



K.Pallett: Editor signing off.

This appointee position is now vacant. It is important that it is quickly filled as the newsletter provides a record of NG's activities. It is crucial that we document activities - they store/are our history. After 5 years I need to stop but it is with sadness as I have been enriched by my involvement. The newsletter has increased in size, however, it was my choice to include the detail and the photos. The next editor starts afresh and will create their own newsletter. Best wishes to the new appointee.

Advertisement....

Hello to the person who has been waiting for the opportunity to satisfy a writing interest. This easy task is for you.

It requires you to compile information, mostly from emails and also gather members' experiences e.g. from excursions. Jot it all down with a few photos if available and send it off to Karen for uploading!