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# NEWSLETTER

Leader: Maria Hitchcock  
 16 Hitchcock Lane  
 Armidale NSW 2350  
 Ph. 02 6775 1139  
 maria.hitchcock@gmail.com

**Welcome to any  
 new readers!**  
**Why not join us?**  
**It's free!**  
**Just send an  
 email.**

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*Alloxylon pinnatum* Image: M. Hitchcock

Share this newsletter with  
 friends, colleagues and  
 other garden lovers.  
 Encourage them to join.

**Past Newsletters  
 are available  
 here**  
<http://coolnatives.com.au/wffsgnewsletters.html>

**The Waratah and Flannel Flower Study Group is affiliated with the  
 Australian Native Plants Society (Australia) - ANPSA**  
**This is an electronic only group.**  
**Newsletters are sent out twice a year usually in May and November (electronic only).**  
**Membership is free to individuals and APS (SGAP) groups.**  
**There is no deadline for newsletter contributions - send them anytime, sooner rather than later.**

**Maria writes:**

This newsletter is a little late but I was determined to get it to you before the end of the year. Since October I have been leading an intensive campaign to save our iconic Dumaresq dam. The NSW Dam Safety Committee decided that the dam wall (about 120 years old and built of stone) was not built to modern standards and either had to be strengthened or removed. This wonderful body of water was the town's first water supply and since 1972 has been a recreation reserve enjoyed by locals and visitors.

Council gave the community four options but the word had got around that their preferred option was to lower the wall which would leave us with a reedy puddle unfit for boating, kayaking and swimming. The last submissions and petitions were sent in just before the closing date of December 22. During the campaign I had to drop my usual activities such as this newsletter but I'm sure you will all agree that saving the dam was worth it. At this stage I think we may have won. There has been overwhelming community support to retain the dam at its current height. The difficulty will be in finding almost \$2 million dollars to reinforce the wall according to the engineering recommendations. It has to withstand a 1:100,000 year flood. Go figure! The flood that led to Noah's Ark was less than 10,000 years ago if one believes the bible story.

Armidale has been in the grip of a major drought for 2 years but we have had some respite with excellent December rains. Let's hope the drought has now broken and we are

in for our normal (what's normal these days) rainfall figures. The dry and hot conditions made it a challenge to keep the garden alive. I do have a bore that I can call on for supplementary watering and it was a case of using a low pressure sprinkler and timer and moving the hose from one part of the garden to another. In this way I was able to save most of my waratahs - one Shady Lady Red succumbed but it had the most competition for water so it was understandable.

I'm still working on the right potting mix for my Flannel Flowers - germination is not a problem but I tend to lose them in the first two months after potting on. My latest batch seems to be more successful. I'm now collecting seed off plants which I propagated a couple of years ago. I find the best way to grow them is in terracotta pots on my place but I will try scattering them in the garden now that the drought may be over.

Thank you to the members who contributed to this newsletter. It's always good to get your emails and photos. I'd love some research articles from those of you working in institutions.

Due to a mealybug infestation while I was overseas and the effects of the drought, my Waratahs didn't flower well this spring. I am looking forward to an Autumn flowering.

I would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year and look forward to communicating with you all in the coming year.

Maria

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## Seedbank

I am still holding Flannel Flower seed donated by Margaret Guenzel but it's getting a bit old now. If you would like me to post you some please send me an SAE (2 stamps required). Growing instructions are enclosed with the seed. I always welcome fresh FF seed for our seedbank so any contributions are welcome. Please make sure you add the date of collection to your packet. I am also looking for any Waratah seed - must be collected off private property or garden.

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### From the members

**Brian Walters** Webmaster of the ANPSA website suggested putting a link to our past newsletters on their website. They have some other information about Waratahs which may be of interest. Go to

<http://anpsa.org.au/waratah.html>

**Margaret Sleigh** writes:

We definitely have some waratahs this year. We have two red bushes, one white and one pink. We had three red but one died in the extreme heat last summer and it has been replaced with the pink. We have a couple of white flowers this year. Very exciting!



Margaret's white waratah coming in to flower. This is the time to fertilise (at bud break).

Margaret Lee writes:

I'm thrilled with my flannel flowers this year. I've attached a photo. This was taken at the flower show on 11<sup>th</sup> October. I took the pot to the Home Show the following week and it's still looking great with about 4 times as many flowers. You mentioned a fertilizer for dealing with the yellowing, but I've mislaid the name.

*Ed. I suggested Margaret try Nitrosol.*



Margaret's Flannel Flower in a pot.

I finally managed to get some Nitrosol. But, like the other fertilizers I used, it made no difference to the flannel flower foliage. However, then after we'd had some problems with yellowing of *Correas* and *Prostanthera* at Mt. Lofty BG nursery, the penny dropped. I tried iron chelates on them all and they have greened up beautifully after only 2 applications. I don't think there's much iron in the potting soil we use, and our water is inclined to be alkaline. I used the flannel flowers in my Christmas table decorations, with white *Syzygium* flowers and green leaves and gold-sprayed tiny gumnuts and leaves and slim *Banksia marginata* seedpods.

## Mt Tomah Waratah Festival

Frank Allatt Secretary, Sent 22/9/14  
Wildflower Industry Network NSW Inc.

This year's Waratah Blooms Competition has been the most difficult in its 17 year history. The long winter and no warm/hot weather in late August has meant that waratahs are just now becoming available and then only in some parts of the State, so only some of the early varieties have reached market – Cardinal, Mirrigan, Starfire, a few seedling waratahs, Brimstone early, Brimstone blush and some of the Truncata hybrids. The 'flush' has not yet occurred. However, a big thanks to the 9 growers who managed to scrape up enough product to send in for the competition and for the floral displays. A big thanks to Bettina and to Cathy for the Judging. Also to Craig Scott (East Coast Wildflowers) for the additional product supplied for the floral arrangements. Whilst spectacular, much of this product is also unusual. East Coast Wildflowers is a Festival sponsor.

The Show Champion bloom was judged to be a cultivar. This is a **Brimstone Blush** bloom supplied by **Gordon Meiklejohn**. Gordon wins 2 nights accommodation at the jungle Lodge, Mount Tomah. The winning seedling bloom was supplied by **Craig Scott**. This is a \$50 prize. The winning cultivar bloom was supplied by **Katie Maul**. The cultivar was **Sunflare**. This is a \$50 prize. Katie and her partner Dennis had Bilpin Waratah Farm until it was sold a few years back. Dennis (now deceased) was a president of WIN for a number of years. Katie still grows a few waratahs in her backyard. Sunflare is a clone from the 1990's. The winning hybrid bloom was supplied by **Col Terry**. It was a speciosissima x truncata cross. The cross is known as **Georgie Girl** and is one of the **Wild Brumby series developed by Brian Fitzpatrick** of Batlow. Again a \$50 prize. Below is a collage showing a part of the display with judges, the winning blooms, and some of the floral arrangements.



### *Alloxylon pinnatum* Dorrigo or Tree Waratah

At the Armidale Farmers Market yesterday one stall was making a killing selling bunches and bunches of the Dorrigo or Tree Waratah in full flower. Being very close to Christmas the colours of red and dark green were just right. Most customers were attracted to the display but would have been ignorant of the background of this amazing plant. Some friends told me they had bought a bunch at another market a week ago but they only lasted two days in the vase and then promptly died. That set up a challenge so I parted with some money and brought home a couple of bunches.

*Alloxylon pinnatum* grows naturally in warm temperate rainforests around Dorrigo, Mt Hyland and in the McPherson ranges which straddle the NSW-Qld border. As it grows at high altitudes, from 700m - 1250m, it is fairly cold tolerant and has been successfully grown by Mt Tomah BG and ANBG for many years in a sheltered, semi-shaded position with a deep mulch layer. In fact it probably requires a similar situation to the hybrid waratahs although I suspect it might need some microbial action in the soil to help it along. I have to confess trialing and losing a few of them over the years. They never got past the pot stage in winter and I suspect that drainage may have been the problem for it does require very good drainage. I have also read that it requires a site with deep loam although most Proteaceae are sensitive to fertiliser and deep loam implies a fertile soil.

The trees can grow up to over 20m tall in the wild but are usually kept at about 6m in cultivation. The market seller has a plantation of them on his property at Dorrigo. Flowers are of the open Waratah type but crowded with up to 140 flowers in a cluster, appearing from October to January. For years my family went to the coast for our annual Christmas holiday in December and we passed a garden near Dorrigo which had a flowering tree in the front yard. The species has bright green pinnate leaves growing up to 40cm long and when in

flower attracts a large number of nectar - feeding birds and insects. Woody brown follicles containing flat papery seeds appear from February to June. Seeds lose their viability after 12 months so fresh is best. Plants need to be cross-pollinated to produce seeds. Like many Proteaceae cuttings can be difficult.



Vase of *A. pinnatum* flowers Image: M. Hitchcock

Listed as threatened now, this species was sought after years ago for its cabinet wood. Acquiring plants can be problematic and one rarely sees them in the trade. They are very slow growing and obviously for plantations it would be desirable to have a reliable method of cutting cultivation as such plants would flower early and good forms can be selected.

I have successfully grown and flowered the related Qld Firewheel tree (*Stenocarpus sinuatus*) here in my garden in Armidale so it may be possible to grow *A. pinnatum* as well. If anyone can add to the information in this article please send it to me for the next newsletter.

As for extending the vase life of my flowers, I recut the stems underwater, made sure the vase was clean and added a small amount of sugar and lemon juice to the water. They lasted 7 days - some were better than others.

#### References:

<http://www.anbg.gov.au/gnp/interns-2005/alloxylon-pinnatum.html>  
<http://plantnet.rbgsvyd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfll&lvl=sp&name=Alloxylon-pinnatum>

**Waratah pests and diseases**

**Margaret Sleight** writes:

I am worried that my Waratahs are being attacked by some pest(s) and or disease. My first concern was the Shady Lady Red but when I was taking photos, I thought I should check them all. I was concerned to notice the problem with the Braidwood Brilliant. I suspect it is water logged. The leaves feel squishy and drop off if you touch them. I pondered this a bit because it is in a raised bed and gets no more water than the other three. However, it may be getting water underground because it is closest to the back garden. It is separated by a colorbond fence but of course that will not stop water. There is a garden bed on the other side of the fence, only 4 metres from the BB and it gets watered regularly. I can change the watering system in the back garden quite easily. Do you think that will be enough if I leave the BB to dry out?

On the Shady Lady Red one picture, there are three problems that I can see. The discolourations – white with brown along the edge marked A is where the leaves got burnt last year. I am not terribly worried about that except that in some places the leaf is going brown past the burnt bit. B shows two problems, yellowing leaves and the funny twisted shape. You can see other views in the other three pics that I am sending just in case you want to see them. Actually in Number two I can see a possible culprit that I did not notice when I was taking the picture. About a third of the way down on the left is an insect. It is munching on a leaf. I guess I need to find a spray to get rid of it.



T. Shady Lady Red



T. Shady Lady Red



T. Braidwood Brilliant

**Brian Fitzpatrick (Waratah Australis)** writes:

I can notice a few problems. Firstly with pests, one is simply a leaf eating caterpillar or grasshopper, the other showing more distortion to the leaf is more likely mite damage, which can often affect whole plants and stunt growth. For the mites I use potassium soap, Yates market a product that was called Natrasoap, but may market it under another name now. Alternatives are the more commercial miticides.

The primary problem though looks like wet feet and could involve root rot and/or crown rot. Symptoms on leaves look like stress due to disease or overwet conditions, plants also look young so really aren't established yet to their site. Some of symptoms also look like leaf scorch from hot weather, which may have added to the problem.

I can only recommend cutting back on water, no fertiliser, checking drainage and maybe a spray of Yates Anti-Rot (Phosacid systemic fungicide).

**Maria** writes:

It could be a drainage problem. One way is to take a crowbar and dig a narrow deep hole in between plants. If it fills with water then it's a drainage problem.

**Margaret Lee** writes:

The Braidwood Brilliant looks like typical leaf scorch in very hot sunny weather early in the season. The new leaves look fine, so if the damaged ones offend, just cut off the scorched part. I had the same problem with my 10 y.o. Tasmanian waratah when we had a few scorching hot days in early spring, but the new leaves put on since are fine. Very few of the other waratahs were affected at all and I assume they are better adjusted to heat.

Shady Lady 1. Some distortion suggests sucking insects but patches on leaves with paleness between veins does not look quite like the BB.

Perhaps a nutrient or trace element in short supply? Has any fertilizer been used?

Shady Lady 2 - See Braidwood Brilliant

Shady Lady 3 - See Shady Lady 1

Shady Lady 4 - A chewing insect appears to have had a meal. I would only spray as a last resort.

Hope this helps. It will be interesting to see what other feedback you receive.

**Frank Allatt** writes:

The Braidwood Brilliant appears to have leaf minor and the affected leaves should be removed and destroyed before the bubble on the leaf bursts. There may also be a fungal problem.

The leaves on the Shady Lady appear to have been sunburnt. Both plants appear to be in need of a good feed e.g. a suitable organic native plant food (low phosphorus + minerals) or Patons Native plant food. It seems both waratahs started to grow well in spring but now the new leaves seem to be suffering.

**Checklist of *Telopea* species and varieties** (Recent additions are in blue)Species:

<i>Telopea aspera</i>	Gibraltar Range NSW
<i>Telopea mongaensis</i>	Braidwood Waratah - NSW
<i>Telopea oreades</i>	Gippsland Waratah - Vic.
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	NSW Waratah
<i>Telopea truncata</i>	Tasmanian Waratah

Pink Cultivars:

<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Brimstone Pink' - Fire 'n Brimstone (Nixon)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Brimstone Pink Passion'
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Shade of Pale'
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i> x <i>T. truncata</i> <i>lutea</i>	'Champagne' (Downe)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i> x <i>truncata</i>	'Digger' - Wild Brumby (Fitzpatrick)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i> x <i>mongaensis</i>	'Mallee Boy' - Wild Brumby (Fitzpatrick)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Tutu'
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Clarence Pink'
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'In the Pink' (Yellow Rock Nursery/Nixon)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i> x ' <i>Wirrimbirra White</i> '	'Dreaming' (Fitzpatrick)

Red Cultivars:

<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Ballerina'
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Brimstone Blush' - Fire 'n Brimstone (Nixon)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Brimstone Early' - Fire 'n Brimstone (Nixon)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Cardinal'
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i> x <i>mongaensis</i>	'Corroboree'
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Corrakee' (Karwarra Gardens)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i> x <i>oreades</i>	'Emperor's Torch' - Ausflora Pacific, Gembrook Vic.
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Fire and Brimstone' - Fire 'n Brimstone (Nixon)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Fire 'n Ice' (Roy Rother, Emerald Vic/Downe)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i> x <i>oreades</i>	'Gembrook' - Ausflora Pacific, Gembrook Vic.
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Green Bracts'
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Mirragon'
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Olympic Flame' - Mt Annan (Cathy Offord)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Red Centre'
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Roger's Red' Gordon Meiklejohn (Brimstone Waratahs)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Songlines' - Yellow Rock Nursery , Winmallee NSW
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Starfire' Gordon Meiklejohn (Brimstone Waratahs)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Stringers Late'
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Sunflare' - Mt Annan (Cathy Offord)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Sunburst' University of Sydney (Offord, Nixon, Goodwin)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i> x <i>mongaensis</i>	'Braidwood Brilliant'
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i> x <i>oreades</i>	'Shady Lady Crimson' - Proteaflora
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i> x <i>oreades</i>	'Shady Lady Pink' - Proteaflora

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Red Cultivars:

<i>Telopea mongaensis</i> x <i>speciosissima</i>	'Canberry Gem' - (Doug's hybrid/Canberry Coronet)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i> x <i>truncata</i>	'Sugar Plum' - Wild Brumby (Fitzpatrick)
<i>Telopea truncata</i>	'Tasman Red'

White Cultivars:

<i>Telopea oreades</i>	'Errindundra White'
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Wirrimbirra White' (also marketed briefly as 'Shady Lady White' - naturally occurring <i>T. speciosissima</i> clone found in the NSW Water Board area by Thistle Stead. Link <a href="http://www.wirrimbirra.com.au/Wirrimbirra%20white.htm">http://www.wirrimbirra.com.au/Wirrimbirra%20white.htm</a>
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i> x <i>oreades</i>	'Shady Lady White' (improved) same as 'Bridal Gown' (Downe)
<i>T. speciosissima</i> x <i>truncata</i>	'Snow Maiden' - Wild Brumby (Fitzpatrick)

Yellow/Cream Cultivars:

<i>Telopea speciosissima</i> x <i>truncata</i> <i>lutea</i>	'Shady Lady Yellow' same as 'Golden Globe' (Downe)
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i> x <i>truncata</i>	'Georgie Girl' - Wild Brumby (Fitzpatrick)
<i>Telopea truncata</i>	'St Mary's Sunrise'
<i>Telopea truncata</i>	'West Coast Yellow'

**Related Genera**

<i>Alloxylon pinnata</i>	Dorrigo Waratah
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***Can you add to this list?  
Do you have any information  
on growing any of these  
species or varieties?***

**Checklist of Actinotus species and varieties**

<i>Actinotus bellidioides</i>	Vic (presumed extinct), Tas
<i>Actinotus forsythii</i>	Kings Tableland, Mount Hay, Narrow Neck, Hargraves Look out, Kanangra Walls, above scenic railway (Blue Mts) NSW VIC
<i>Actinotus gibbonsii</i>	NSW, QLD
<i>Actinotus glomeratus</i>	WA
<i>Actinotus helianthi</i>	NSW, Qld (Flannel Flower), VIC (naturalised)
<i>Actinotus humilis</i>	WA
<i>Actinotus laxis</i>	WA
<i>Actinotus leucocephalus</i>	WA
<i>Actinotus minor</i>	NSW
<i>Actinotus moorei</i>	TAS
<i>Actinotus omnifertilis</i>	WA
<i>Actinotus paddisonii</i>	Bourke NSW, Qld
<i>Actinotus periculosus</i>	QLD
<i>Actinotus rhomboideus</i>	WA
<i>Actinotus schwartzii</i>	MacDonnell Ranges NT
<i>Actinotus suffocatus</i>	TAS
<i>Actinotus superbus</i>	WA
<i>Actinotus sp. Comet Vale</i>	WA
<i>Actinotus sp. Walpole</i>	WA
<i>Actinotus whicheranus</i>	WA
<i>Actinotus novaezealandiae</i>	Te Wai Punamu (South Island) New Zealand

Cultivars:

<i>Actinotus helianthi</i>	'Starbright'
<i>Actinotus helianthi</i>	'Federation Stars' <sup>TM</sup>
<i>Actinotus helianthi</i>	'Parkes Star'

Ref: <http://chah.gov.au/chah/apc/interim/Apiaceae.pdf>