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# NEWSLETTER

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

In this issue. . .

Maria writes:	p. 2
From the members	p. 3
Propagating <i>Actinotus forsythii</i>	p. 4/5
WIN Wildflower farm tour	p. 6-8
Checklist of <i>Telopea</i> species and varieties	p. 9/10
Checklist of <i>Actinotus</i> species and varieties	p. 11



*Telopea speciosissima* 'Mirragon'

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

**Past Newsletters  
 are available  
 here**  
<http://coolnatives.com.au/wffsgnewsletter-s.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 (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:**

We're having a better season this year but the forecasts say that there is an El Nino round the corner so we could be in for another dry spring, the 3rd in a row. My plants are gradually recovering from a Mealy bug infestation - we tracked it down to a nearby Grass tree which was affected. It's hard to spray the inside of a grass tree but with persistence we may have beaten it using Anti-Scale and Roundup. I have a recipe for an organic method of dealing with scale gleaned from the Gardening Australia website - not sure if it will work but I'm happy to experiment. I've added it to this newsletter. If you can get hold of it Sacoa BioPest is another solution - more economical than the other sprays.

I wanted to hold off on producing this newsletter until after the June Long Weekend as I was booked on the Wildflower Industry Network farm tour weekend. It really was a great weekend and I would thoroughly recommend it to other growers. I believe it is an annual event and am looking forward to joining in again next year. You can read my report in this newsletter.

In November I will be attending the ANPSA Biennial Conference and am slotted to do a brief presentation on this Study Group. I hope to have a static display and will hand out postcards and business cards. Can you help? Membership of Study Groups has declined markedly over the past few years due to the ageing of the ANPSA membership base. This is quite sad as there are some wonderful people out there doing some amazing personal research.

What a pity that a lot of this will be lost. Publishing is not what it used to be and there is a small local market for flora related books. Our newsletters are read and then discarded although I do know people who file them away as a good reference. The internet is full of so much junk, one has to spend a long time finding information and then it may not be reliable.

I suppose the best way to preserve information is by ensuring it becomes mainstream and is handed down from grower to grower. It will then be picked up by magazines and TV programs and relayed further. The originator of the information may be long forgotten but the details live on. There appears to be a strange dichotomy in our society between self-help guides and reality. We have a wealth of cooking shows but are told that we are actually cooking less and relying more on prepared foods.

Gardening shows hit the airwaves on the weekend with any number of hints, ideas and suggestions for having that ideal garden. But how many people actually have a lovely garden? For younger people the weekend is when you go to the beach/camping/playing sport, etc. Why not? So many homes take up most of the building block these days leaving only a small space for the garden. It's just not that important any more.

Thank goodness we still have a number of enthusiasts out there. One of them is Lloyd Hedges of Menai who I swear has ten green fingers and ten green toes. He has been able to propagate *Actinotus forsythii* - I dips me lid. Read about it in this newsletter.

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 fresh Waratah seed, in particular *T. mongaensis* and *T. oreades* - must be collected off private property or in the garden. Unfortunately commercial seed is often very old and not viable.

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## From the members

### Margaret Sleigh

Dennis and I went through all the advice and had a really good look at the plants and the soil in the light of advice and suggestions. We decided that they are definitely NOT waterlogged. They are not dying of thirst either. We cut off the scorched leaves and lots of the funny shaped bits and the plants now look much healthier. The leaves FEEL healthy if you know what I mean. They are strong and a good colour. The plants have so many new shoots that I could not count them so I have to say that they are bushing up beautifully.

We went to one of the local nurseries to get something to spray for mites. The attendant has horticultural qualifications and he raised his eyebrows about the mites and asked if we could see them. We said "No" and he said he did not expect they would be there now. He said no point in spraying as they are long gone. He said to watch out earlier in spring and spray then if they return.

They had not been watered since Christmas Day because of the discussions about whether they might be waterlogged so I gave them a really good watering today and had the bright idea that if I also water all over the shade cloth and leave it really wet, the result will be a bit of humidity around there as the cloth dries out. Anyway we are going to incorporate that practice into our method of looking after Waratahs and see if it appears to help. Mind you in 35 degree heat, the shade cloth does not stay wet for long. I will give them a little feed of blood and bone this evening as well.

A note about the Braidwood Brilliant. I thought the leaves felt mushy. Some of them did. I wonder if it did get too much water at some point but as can be seen by the new leaves – little bunches of them all over the plant – it has recovered from that. I brushed

my hands over the whole bush and a lot of the mushy leaves fell off. The remainder are definitely staying.

### Peter Shelton (APS Sutherland)

I received this from Bruce Cooper for our APS group newsletter. You might find it of interest.

"Hi, maybe a pic for the next APS newsletter – Jean came across large displays of Pink Flannel Flower (*Actinotus forsythii*) at Mt Victoria (Icara Head track) while bushwalking recently. Apparently it flowers sporadically after fire and then rain but in some years is seldom seen."



*Actinotus forsythii*

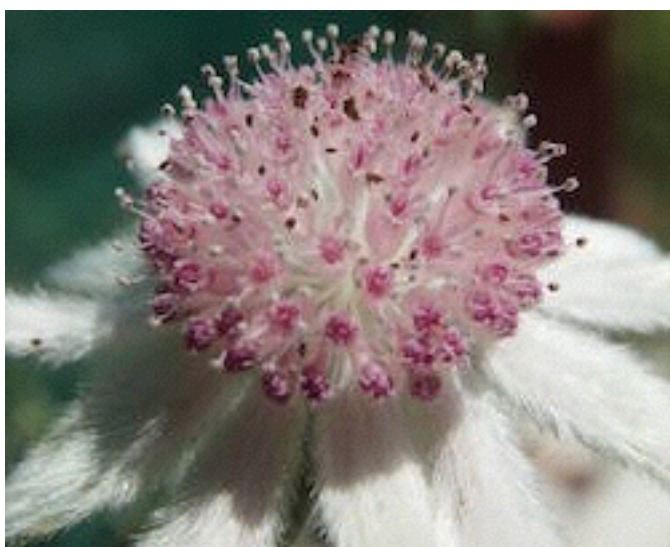


**Success with propagating**

***Actinotus forsythii***

Menai Wildflower Group Facebook Page  
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Menai-Wild-flower-Group/156676031189287>

*Photos by Erden Sizgek.*



Dec 26, 2013

A rare sight of blooming flannel flowers at the North Head Quarantine Station's third cemetery in early November.

Flannel flowers at North Head. A good example of the opportunistic nature of flannel flowers. The scrub has been cleared and the flannels seize the chance.

March 11 2014

Thanks to David finding the Pink Flannel flowers and great pictures I was inspired to go and have a look. The area where they are was an exposed, recently burnt, sharply sloped heathland. The flannel flowers -*Actinotus forsythii*- were mainly along the lower edge among the emerging Heath Banksia seedlings.

March 26 2014

Pink flannel flowers are fading but still beautiful. The waterfalls are refreshed by autumn rain.

Dec. 22 2014

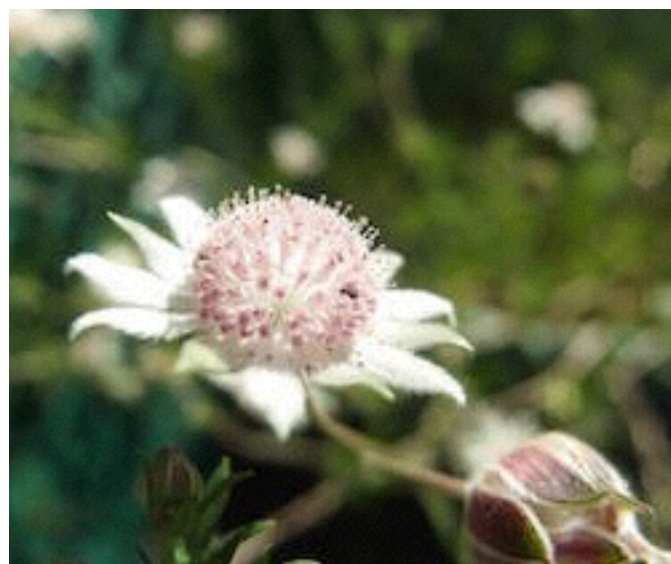
A second Pink Flannel flower has opened. There are plenty more coming.

Jan 7 2015

The Pink Flannel flowers are now in full bloom at the IRFB. If you want to have a look come along to the Illawong rural fire station on Saturday 10th Jan at 1pm.

Jan 19 2015

The Pink Flannel flowers have reached their peak. We have tried three different potting/soil mixes and the debco potting mix cut with washed crushed sandstone and a bit of charcoal has done best. But the question I have is 'What pollinates them'? Why do I see no evi-



Feb 28 2015

We took a trip to Gooch's crater to see a new crop of pink flannel flowers that have emerged after the fires. Roger Lempit an ecologist found them and supplied directions to David Forbes who led us to them. The recovery after the fires is promising next Spring to be something special to lovers of wildflowers.



The flowers are small compared to *Actinotus belianthi* but much bigger than *A. minor*. I suspect they are annuals as the plants are looking sick.

I have had a good seed set and am about to carry out trials to try and improve the germination rate etc.



Lloyd Hedges March 3 2015

It is still early days and my experience base is too small to say anything with confidence but here is what has happened so far.

I retrieved some seed from some flowers in Feb 2014. I treated them with smoked water leaving to soak for about an hour. Germination took about a month and the rate was very low - from a couple of hundred seeds I got 10 plants.

I lost one on tubing up and another when I planted them out in October. The remaining eight grew vigorously enjoying the feed of Aquasol I pushed them along with.

They started flowering mid December and hit their straps in January lasting through February before becoming ratty.





**Wildflower Industry Network  
Farm Tour 6/7 June 2015**

Images: M. Hitchcock

The farm tour began at Eungai Creek just south of Macksville NSW. David and Sandra Robinson live on Browns Crossing Road on a property which is almost an island as the creek rings their block. As a result the lower sections have to withstand periodic flooding.



A row of Shady Lady waratahs in a sheltered position on the Robinson farm

After everyone arrived we were treated to a sumptuous lunch then started on the tour. The farm has a pecan nut plantation, complete with tree shaker, collection gear and silo for drying the nuts. Rows of Waratahs, Grevilleas, Banksias, Proteas, Leucadendrons and a few other varieties of flowering plants made up the rest of the commercial side of the property. David explained that he works on the 20:80 rule. 20% of his time is spent on the pecans but they give him 80% of his return. On the other hand he spends 80% of his time on the flowers with a 20% return.

Over the weekend I learnt that the number of flower growers in the area had diminished quite substantially since the Olympic year of 2000. David has his plants raised in mounded rows with an irrigation line running through the middle. Most have a cover of mulch mat to suppress weeds. He said that his best row

of Waratahs was the row that had no weed mat but instead he had added a thick mulch of hardwood chips and he fertilised the row with blood and bone. *Telopea* Mirragon was his favoured variety.



*Telopea speciosissima* Mirragon with vigorous upright stems

After the tour we sat down to a meeting with a cuppa. It was then time to head into town, change clothes at the motel, buy some breakfast items at the supermarket across the road and make my way to the Star Hotel for dinner. There were 16 of us at a couple of large tables on the closed in verandah and a great night was had by all. Many growers had travelled large distances that day and were keen to catch up with colleagues.



Harry Kibbler's basic Compost Tea setup. Compost tea is used in dilution to improve the soil.

Sunday morning was fine. I drove south towards Kempsey, turned off to Gladstone and made my way to Vergers Creek. Harry Kibbler, one of our members, lives on Plover Lane and specialises in Flannel Flower production which he grows under cover in large plastic bag pots in hoop houses. We looked at his propagation trays which were filled with the mix that I now use 1:1:1 coir peat: fine vermiculite: fine perlite.



Flannel Flowers are grown in large bags with a drip irrigation system

Harry is also experimenting with seeding the bags directly to cut the pricking out stage. It will be interesting to see his results. He has selected and selected the best of his crop each year and has some stunning flowers which go to the Flower Market in Sydney.



Some of Harry's selected flower varieties

Most are exported as the domestic market for Flannel Flowers is quite small but Harry says that he thinks it is now starting to grow. His property also boasts rows of Christmas Bush, Waratahs, Grevilleas, etc. and he is currently experimenting with some Acacias in his wind-breaks.

We all headed to the Gladstone Hotel for lunch then drove back towards Kempsey and turned into Crescent Head Rd. Paul Daley's property is off Patterson Lane and overlooks the new freeway. The first thing you notice is the Gynea Lilies which dominate parts of the property. The lilies and leaves are sold for export. We toured his greenhouses which contain hundreds of Kangaroo Paws, Flannel Flowers and a range of other plants he is experimenting with.



Kangaroo Paws under shelter on the Daley farm

Outside we walked among rows of Waratahs, Christmas Bush, *Banksia robur*, Grevilleas and some bush food items like Finger Lime which we were able to sample. Some of the varieties are very seasonal. Christmas Bush only has a narrow marketing window in the few weeks before Christmas. If it is late to colour up you have lost that crop.





Paul grows Flannel Flowers in pairs in large pots



He has hundreds of Gynea Lilies planted in rows.



A row of *Banksia robur* caught my attention

Thank you to the three growers and the organisers of the weekend for allowing me to participate. I was very impressed with the range of plants being grown and the persistence required to overcome pests and weather events. I wish everyone an excellent season and a bountiful harvest.

**Home made Oil-based spray**  
From Gardening Australia website 04/02/2012

**Horticultural oil**  
2 cups of vegetable oil  
½ cup of dishwashing detergent.

Shake together in a jar, where the mixture will turn a milky colour.

Add 2 tablespoons of this concentrate to a litre of water and it's ready to spray.

This controls most insect pests, including scale, aphids, white fly, leaf miner, mealy bug and mites.

**Do you have your own  
Home Made spray recipes  
that really work?  
Share them with us.**

**HELP!**

Isn't it terrible when you copy something from the web and then can't find it again. Does anyone know anything about this variety, *Telopea* Scarlet Ribbons?



*Telopea speciosissima* 'Scarlet Ribbons'



## Checklist of *Telopea* species, cultivars and hybrids

### 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>	'Tutu'
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'Clarence Pink'
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	'In the Pink' (Yellow Rock Nursery/Nixon)

### 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>	'Corrakee' (Karwarra Gardens)
<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>	'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 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>

### Yellow/Cream Cultivars:

<i>Telopea truncata</i>	'St Mary's Sunrise'
<i>Telopea truncata</i>	'West Coast Yellow'

Red Hybrids:

<i>Telopea speciosissima x mongaensis</i>	'Braidwood Brilliant'
<i>Telopea mongaensis x speciosissima</i>	'Canberry Gem' - (Doug's hybrid/Canberry Coronet)
<i>Telopea speciosissima x mongaensis</i>	'Corroboree'
<i>Telopea speciosissima x oreades</i>	'Emperor's Torch' - Ausflora Pacific, Gembrook Vic.
<i>Telopea speciosissima x oreades</i>	'Gembrook' - Ausflora Pacific, Gembrook Vic.
<i>Telopea speciosissima x oreades</i>	'Shady Lady Crimson' - Proteaflora
<i>Telopea speciosissima x oreades</i>	'Shady Lady Pink' - Proteaflora
<i>Telopea speciosissima x oreades</i>	'Shady Lady Red' - Proteaflora
<i>Telopea speciosissima x truncata</i>	'Sugar Plum' - Wild Brumby (Fitzpatrick)
<i>Telopea speciosissima x oreades</i>	'T90-T-O-T' - Proteaflora ("Shady Lady" seed)

Pink Hybrids

<i>Telopea speciosissima x T. truncata lutea</i>	'Champagne' (Downe)
<i>Telopea speciosissima x truncata</i>	'Digger' - Wild Brumby (Fitzpatrick)
<i>Telopea speciosissima x mongaensis</i>	'Mallee Boy' - Wild Brumby (Fitzpatrick)
<i>Telopea speciosissima x 'Wirrimbirra White'</i>	'Dreaming' (Fitzpatrick)

White Hybrids:

<i>Telopea speciosissima x oreades</i>	'Shady Lady White' (original) similar to <i>T. speciosissima</i> 'Wirrimbirra White'
<i>Telopea speciosissima x oreades</i>	'Shady Lady White' (improved) same as 'Bridal Gown' (Downe)
<i>Telopea speciosissima x truncata</i>	'Snow Maiden' - Wild Brumby (Fitzpatrick)

Yellow/Cream Hybrids:

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

**Related Genera**

<i>Alloxylon brachycarpum</i>	Indonesia, Papua New Guinea
<i>Alloxylon flammeum</i>	Queensland Tree Waratah (Red Silky Oak)
<i>Alloxylon pinnata</i>	Dorrigo Waratah
<i>Alloxylon wickhamii</i>	

**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>