

February - March 2012

President	Secretary	Treasurer
Maria Hitchcock	Liisa Atherton	Phillip Rose
6775 1139	6779 1968	6775 3767



Boronia floribunda Rigby Hill Blue Mts



Isopogon anemonifolius Rigby Hill Blue Mts



Banksia spinulosa 'Gold' Pierces Pass Blue Mts

This is a fairly rare form of *Banksia spinulosa* being all gold. The shrub was growing in an understorey of Eucalypts where it was fairly shaded and the sandy soil was heavily mulched with leaf litter which kept the roots cool and moist.

Images: M. Hitchcock

IMPORTANT

Some of our members are missing out on important notices. If you do not have an email address perhaps you have a friend, relative or neighbour with one who can pass on those messages. Please send me a contact email address so we can

Thank you to all contributors. All articles, snippets and photos are welcome. There is NO DEADLINE for this newsletter.

Articles will be included based on a FIRST COME basis. Please send your articles, snippets, letters to Maria at maria.hitchcock@gmail.com or send a hard copy to PO Box 735 Armidale NSW 2350.

PHOTOS should be sent individually as jpg files either via email or copied onto a disk.

GROUP INFORMATION

The Armidale and District Group of APS---NSW started on 6th August, 1977 as the New England Group of the Society for Growing Australian Plants. It has been running continuously since that time with a couple of name changes. We are a very friendly and helpful group who enjoy monthly forums and meetings, garden visits and field trips to help members enjoy the search for knowledge about our native flora and our local environment. We range from raw beginners to others who have been gardening and researching for many years - all willing to share their knowledge.

Formal Meetings are held at 5.30pm on the second Tuesday of each month. Members are welcome to attend. **Native Plant and Garden Forums** are held in the **TAFE Library Seminar Room** on the 3rd Tuesday of each month (except June, July, December and January) from 7.30 – 9.30 where members talk about plants in flower from specimens displayed on the flower table and share information about gardening topics. The Forum is followed by a delicious supper and an interesting speaker. Old and new members, visitors and families, are very welcome at these Forums and on our outings (see page 8 for details). **Annual General Meeting** is held in February. **Solstice Function** is held in June. This is usually a lunch and garden ramble at the home of one of our members. **Wattle Day Activity** is held on a day closest to 1 September. **Christmas Party** is held early in December at the home of one of our members. We also lead regular **trips into the bush** and the occasional **weekend escape to the coast** or elsewhere. We participate in **St Peter's Garden Tour** in November each year, opening one of our gardens to the public and holding our **Giant Annual Plant Sale**. We hold a **Market Stall** each month in the Mall. Come along and say hello. Our members have also been active in developing and maintaining the **Native Garden beds at the Arboretum**. We welcome volunteers who would like to help. See p.8 for details.

ALL YOU NEED TO JOIN OUR GROUP IS AN INTEREST IN OUR NATIVE PLANTS

Your President writes:

This will be my last report as President as I will not be standing for re-election at our AGM. I have enjoyed the term as your President as it has helped me get to know a lot of members. Over the past two years we have seen a number of changes to our group and the way it operates. We have started to run some short trips either in town or close to Armidale to allow more of you to join in and experience seeing our native plants in the wild. Our next short trip will be a walk around Dumaresq Dam on February 19 followed by a BBQ lunch. This should be a fun day. With all the water around, there should be quite a few aquatic birds on the dam. See details p.8

Possibly one of the biggest changes has been a move to our new venue in the TAFE Library Seminar Room. There was a lot of anxiety leading up to this decision but I think most people are now quite happy with the venue. Being centrally located with good parking and lighting it is certainly more convenient. The last Forum we had there attracted a large number of members and the atmosphere was informal and comfortable. Make sure you attend our next one on February 21.

The third major change was to restructure our meetings. We decided to trial holding a Native Plant Forum each month instead of the usual formal meeting. We now only have one business meeting each month held on the 2nd Tuesday at 5.30pm. Any member is eligible to attend but we have found that only the committee tends to turn up. A vote in September made it clear that the members wanted to keep the Forum structure. It gives us a chance to talk about a range of plants and

how to grow them which is really what the Society is about. We usually follow the Forum with supper and then a speaker.

Our next Forum on February 21, will start with our AGM to be followed by supper and an extended Native Plants Forum instead of a speaker. There is also a surprise activity being planned, so make sure you come along.

Mole Station Nursery is now 20 years old - it's amazing how quickly time flies. In this newsletter, Sarah Caldwell has written up how the nursery started and progressed to the present day - including some of their disasters! Sarah and David are good APS members and we are fortunate to have their support in propagating a range of unusual local species and making them available to us at a very reasonable price. I love going there for our annual weekend in October. My husband Don taught Sarah when she was at NEGS many years ago so there is a personal connection.

Our Secretary, Liisa Atherton and our Treasurer, Phil Rose will also be standing down. Both have done a sterling job, in Phil's case for 9 years. I would like to thank both of them for being so professional in their duties. All positions are declared vacant at the AGM so please put your hand up for one of the vacant positions.

Thank you to the contributors to this newsletter. Warren and Gloria Sheather continue to educate us with their excellent articles. Please share your thoughts and photos with us. May you all have an excellent 2012.

Maria

Eremophila laanii

Text and image by Warren & Gloria Sheather



During one of our annual visits to the Tamworth Garden Expo we acquired, amongst other plants, an *Eremophila laanii*. The specimen was duly planted and last spring was covered in blooms. Of all the Eremophilas that we have growing this species would be the most floriferous.

Eremophila laanii is said to be an upright shrub that will reach a height of four metres by three metres wide. At present our plant is about one metre high. If this specimen reaches the dizzy height of four metres then it will be one of our most spectacular shrubs. The leaves are narrow, flat and have the typical Emu Bush succulent feel. Eye-catching, tubular flowers may be white, cream or pink. As the image shows our flowers are pink. The white-flowered form would also make a spectacular splash. The flowering period extends from late winter to early summer. Sporadic flowering may occur at other times.

Eremophila laanii may become woody but regular light pruning should eliminate this problem. Our plant is pruned regularly as we remove cutting material. We have room for lots more of this spectacular shrub in our garden.

The species is found in western central Western Australia where it grows on river flats. Our plant is surviving and thriving in a well drained site. Propagate from cuttings. As with most Emu Bushes this species forms roots quickly and extensively.

**Don't forget:
Memberships are due on 31st March
The easiest way is to pay at the
February Forum.**

Myoporum betcheanum

Text and image by Warren & Gloria Sheather



In the last newsletter we had an article extolling the virtues of *Myoporum bateae*. Since writing the article another *Myoporum* has burst into bloom in our garden for the first time. We first propagated *Myoporum betcheanum*, from cuttings, a few years ago. Last spring our two specimens burst into bloom and then we realised what splendid plants they are. *Myoporum betcheanum* is a member of the Myoporaceae family in company with the better known Eremophilas. Myoporums are known as Boobiallas.

Myoporum betcheanum is a tall shrub or small tree that may reach a height of eight metres. Judicious pruning will keep plants to a more manageable height. Our plants are about three metres tall. Leaves are linear, up to six centimetres long and one centimetre wide. They are toothed and taper to a point. Small flowers are white and 5 millimetres across. What blooms lack in size they make up for in quantity. From one to eight flowers are carried in leaf axils between December and May. During this time the branches are covered in flowers. Globular fruits are white or brown and translucent.

Myoporum betcheanum occurs on the North Coast of New South Wales and south-eastern Queensland. This Boobialla is found on the margins of wet sclerophyll forests and rainforests. In exposed sites the species may be a trifle frost tender. Our plants, growing amongst other shrubs, suffer no frost damage. The species was named after Ernest Betche a botanist who worked, with J. H. Maiden, at Sydney's Botanic Garden. *Myoporum betcheanum* begins flowering just as *Myoporum bateae* finishes. An interesting and long flowering hedge could be created by alternating this two species. Like most Myoporums, it propagates easily from cuttings.

Prostanthera petraea

Text and image by Warren & Gloria Sheather



We read with interest Patrick's report on the Group's visit to Basket Swamp National Park. Included in the plants observed was a species of *Prostanthera* similar in appearance to *P. lasianthos*. We referred to John Hunter's paper on the Park's vegetation published in 2004. He records this species as *Prostanthera* Sp B. In 2006 this mint bush became *Prostanthera petraea*.

Prostanthera petraea is a tall shrub that may reach a height of eight metres. Judicious pruning will keep plants to a more manageable height. Our specimens are kept to a height of two metres. Branches are ridged. Leaves are ovate and up to 70 millimetres long, 20 millimetres wide, strongly aromatic and with entire margins. The upper surface is dull green with a paler lower surface.

The flowers are carried in terminal botryoidal bunches. As we found out whilst writing this article botryoidal means like clusters of grapes. Flowers are white and 20 millimetres across. Flowering takes place in summer in company with the similar *Prostanthera lasianthos*. In our *Prostanthera* collection only the flowers of *Prostanthera nivea* var *induta* match those of this species in size.

Prostanthera petraea is a handsome, hardy shrub with attractive, aromatic foliage and large white flowers. The species is restricted to the Boonoo Boonoo-Bald Rock area extending into Girraween National Park in southern Queensland. As with most Mint Bushes, this one also propagates easily from cuttings.

Membership

by Col Mulquiney

Currently we have 43 memberships (i.e. Life; full joint; full single; concession joint; or concession single) on our files, including five new ones. This represents a significant drop in membership over the year. Several people have resigned their memberships for various reasons, while others have been 'removed' from the list through non-renewal of subscriptions.

Recently the NSW Council has enforced strict conditions on all memberships and the one which is of most concern relates to the removal of membership privileges for those who do not renew their subscription within **two months** of their Renewal Date.

This is done by the NSW Membership Officer in December. It means that the former member is not sent copies of State and National publications; the member is not covered by the State insurance at any function of the Armidale Group, and the Armidale Newsletter will not be sent. Significant discounts for plants at our Markets in the Mall will not be available.

Having said all that there is a way that a member who has achieved a 'lapsed membership' can recover from the situation without penalty. I am happy to discuss this with anyone who is interested. I am also happy to discuss your personal membership details with you.

Most members of our Group now have their subscription **Renewal Date on 31st March** of each year, This date is our Group's Common Renewal Date, and several members have over the past few years paid a 'catch-up' amount for payment of their subscription for part of a year, to bring their renewal date up until 31st March. New members who have joined at times other than this, will also be offered the opportunity to join our common renewal date. I will be contacting all current members concerning their membership shortly. If anyone has any queries concerning membership please contact me,

Col Mulquiney,
Membership Officer, PO Box 735 Armidale, NSW 2350.
Phone: 0267726012.

Or preferably by email: cmul8752@bigpond.net.au

The Genus *Bulbine*

Text and images by Maria Hitchcock

Bulbine is a fairly large genus with about 50 species but only five of them occur in Australia. They are: *Bulbine alata*, *B. bulbosa*, *B. glauca*, *B. semibarbata* and *B. vagans*. I have three of these growing very successfully in my garden. They are wonderful fill-in plants, flower all through the warmer months and will self-sow. What more could you want? They die back in winter but re-emerge in spring which is also when the self-sown seedlings shoot. I find the seedlings are quite easy to pull out. They can be potted on or transplanted to another part of the garden. Some of us will remember the fantastic show that *B. bulbosa* made on Kel Hardingham's place in December 2010. If you don't have any growing, put them on your wish list.



Bulbine bulbosa

Bulbine bulbosa is the most widespread *Bulbine* and probably the most commonly grown. It is a perennial herb growing up to 75cm high but usually smaller, with 3-7 onion-like leaves rising from the base. The erect flower stalks also arise from the base and can have as many as 50 bright yellow flowers which come out in succession, beginning with the lower ones. In the bush they are found growing in damp areas in woodlands and grasslands but I have found them to be very drought tolerant. They can be toxic to livestock so need to be kept away from paddocks.

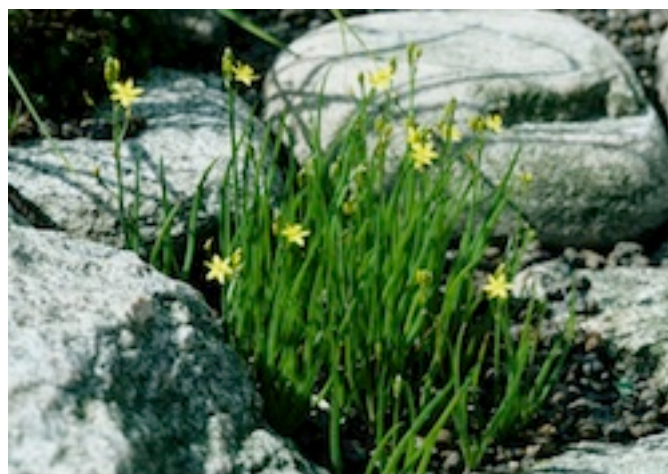
Bulbine vagans has lighter coloured flowers than *B. bulbosa*, is not as tall and has up to 20 leaves in the clump. It has a number of flower stalks which arise from the base and these tend to lie on the ground as they age. Restricted to the Northern tablelands it grows naturally in crevices on cliffs and in herbfields. I have found it to be very adaptable and like *B. bulbosa* it self sows but is not as rampant.



Bulbine vagans

Bulbine semibarbata is also a widespread species occurring mostly inland on granite outcrops and around salt lake margins. It is usually an annual herb but the one in my garden acts like a perennial, dying back in winter and coming back again in spring. It is much finer in appearance than the other two with very narrow leaves that form a clump and erect fine flower stalks with smaller and less showy flowers than *B. bulbosa* and *B. vagans*.

Bulbine glauca occurs on the Southern Tablelands of NSW mostly at higher altitudes and into Victoria. It's a tall perennial with a clump of up to 20 leaves and a very tall erect flower stem carrying up to 75 gold flowers. It also tends to grow in crevices on cliffs. *Bulbine alata* is another arid inland species, an annual which grows on open floodplains and sandplains, exposed stony hillsides, claypans and sandy creek beds across the interior of Australia. It may be difficult to grow in our area.



Bulbine semibarbata

Image: [jcs-bulbine-semibarbata-00382.jpg](#)

20 Year Celebration of Mole Station

by Sarah Caldwell

Mole Station Native Nursery has now been operating for twenty years. It is hard to believe that we have been juggling branding, shearing and potting for so long!



The nursery on Mole Station

When the wool market collapsed in 1991, we were in the middle of shearing. We realised that paying the shearers would require our entire wool income for the year. My mother-in-law, Shirley Caldwell, said that this was an opportunity to do something different. So David and I trialled 2 ventures; a farm tree nursery and growing eucalypts for cut foliage. We planted hundreds of interesting mallee varieties on the rocky hill behind our house. The drainage is good and the frosts not as severe on account of the slope. We soon discovered our trees were not competing with other plantations growing on Darling Downs soil so the nursery idea won.



One of our Mallee Eucalypts

With no knowledge we began composting sawdust to make our own potting media. We collected seed and trialled different containers. In January 1992 we asked all our neighbours and friends over for afternoon tea and opened the nursery. Living 42 km west of Tenterfield, we couldn't wait around for customers so we attended the local shows with our gum trees. Every customer had a

Roundup joke (e.g. If I buy a tree do I receive a drum of Roundup with it?) or a Whippersnapper story (e.g. My husband killed my crepe myrtle and I need a replacement).



Callistemon ready for planting

Although the nursery was in its infant stage, we were immediately expected to be experts. I began studying horticulture in 1992. It took me 6 years by distance education to complete an Advanced Diploma of Horticulture through the University of Sydney, Orange campus. During the early nineties, the Kentucky Tree Expo was held at Jon & Vicki Taylor's property, "The Hill". David & I were there when the gates opened, we were so keen. We bought our first Hikos from the Taylors and have been using the system ever since.

After a year of growing trees, a local nurseryman suggested we grow frost hardy grevilleas in 140 ml pots and keep them out in the frost so that he could buy natives with confidence during winter. We extended the nursery, bought in some tube stock and started potting up 140 ml plants. These sold much better than farm trees initially and from then on we were able to take our own cuttings from the prunings. In November 1993 we sent out our first wholesale stock list. It was very basic; just one page and the 140 ml pots only cost \$2.70. We were dragged into the technological age one morning when a potential customer rang at 6.00 am.

She had been trying to get in touch with us for three weeks and we were never available. After that we bought an answering machine and a fax machine.

In 1994 the drought was at its worst and the entire Mole River dried up. We resorted to digging a bore and watering by hand. Excessive iron levels proved the bore water unsuitable and we were very relieved when rain allowed the river to flow again. In January 1996 a flood caused the wooden Mole River bridge to wash away. Each week the plants on order had to be unloaded on the slippery river bank into a dinghy, rowed across and packed onto a vehicle on the other side to be delivered to the depot in Tenterfield. This continued for three months until the shire council erected a bailey bridge. During 1996 we had 2 more floods which washed parts of the bridge away and then the following year a high concrete bridge was constructed.



Canadian visitors preparing cuttings

Correa 'Federation Belle' was originally a seedling which we found growing in the nursery. Because of its large bright pink bell shaped flowers and 6 month flowering period we had a label made up. In April of 2001 we launched the plant as part of the Tenterfield Year of Federation celebrations. Maria Hitchcock as leader of the *Correa* study group wrote a poem for the occasion & helped us with the publicity.

Our first domain name, www.molestationnursery.com turned out to be a disaster. We didn't realise that the reason we were having 1000s of hits per month wasn't because of a passion for plants - more a passion for porn! The new name www.molerivernursery.com for our web page is gradually becoming more user friendly as we attempt to display photographs of every plant that we propagate. With the increasing interest in internet shopping, many plants are ordered online and travel by

Australia Post throughout New South Wales and occasionally to Victoria & South Australia.



The nursery just escaped being flooded

On January 11th 2011, the Mole River experienced its largest flood since 1893. The flood waters did reach the nursery but luckily weren't high enough to wash any of the nursery infrastructure away. It was a difficult time though with no access, phone or electricity and the entire nursery needing to be watered at the same time! Luckily the new concrete bridge held this time.

Our nursery has trialled many new plants through the generosity of collectors who send us cuttings in the mail. Pat Laher in particular has conscientiously collected the best flowering specimens of wild populations he could find, many of which have proved themselves in cultivation over the years. We have also been very fortunate to have help from the Botany Department at UNE with identifying species. The demand for farm trees across the northern New England Tableland and the Darling Downs has grown over the years and now the nursery grows roughly half and half cutting-grown ornamentals and seedling species for revegetation. Hiko trays are still our most popular revegetation container.

The nursery has been host to numerous tree pick-up days and Landcare tours and we are fortunate to have the local Mole and Sovereign Rivers Red Cross to help with the catering. We always look forward to the weekend at the end of October when the Armidale APS visit to pick up their plants for the St Peter's Open Garden weekend. David and I have stopped expanding the nursery but continue to enjoy learning new things and growing Australian plants.



Mole Station Nursery hardening off area

FOR YOUR DIARY: December 2011 – January 2012

February:

Tuesday 14	5.30 - 7.00pm	Meeting at the Mulquiney's place
Sunday 19	11.00 - 2.00pm	Walk around Dumaresq Dam followed by BBQ lunch. Bring own everything. Pack a fold up chair just in case. The track is easy walking but it could be boggy in places.
Tuesday 21	7.30 - 9.30pm	AGM and extended Native Plants Forum in the TAFE Library Seminar Room.
Sunday 26	8.00 - 1.00pm	Markets in the Mall

March:

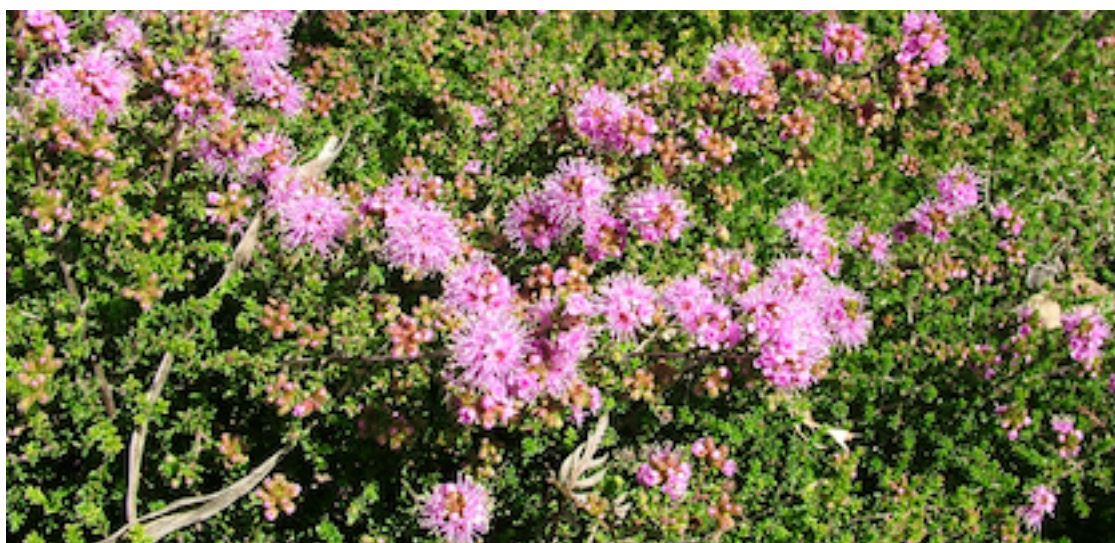
Tuesday 6	1.00 - 3.00pm	Arboretum Working Bee
Tuesday 13	5.30 - 7.00pm	Meeting at the Mulquiney's place
Sunday 18	9.00 - 4.00pm	Outing to Backwater and Warra National Park. Meet at Angus building near northern end of roundabout for car pooling. Bring morning tea, lunch, water, hat, etc.
Tuesday 20	7.30 - 9.30pm	Native Plants Forum in the TAFE Library Seminar Room. Speaker: Phil Tricket (South Coast) - Grafting Banksias and Hakeas.
Sunday 25	8.00 - 1.00pm	Markets in the Mall

April:

Tuesday 3	1.00 - 3.00pm	Arboretum Working Bee
Sunday 8		Easter Sunday
Tuesday 10	5.30 - 7.00pm	Meeting at the Mulquiney's place
Tuesday 17	7.30 - 9.30pm	Native Plants Forum in the TAFE Library Seminar Room. Speaker: t.b.a
Sunday 22	9.00 - 4.00pm	Trip t.b.a
Sunday 29	8.00 - 1.00pm	Markets in the Mall

TAFE Library Seminar Room.

The **Seminar Room** is in the Library Building and is within easy walking distance from on-street parking or from one of the TAFE car parks. There are **three car parks** in the TAFE grounds with entry from Beardy St, Rusden St or Allingham St. The Library is situated **in the middle of the campus** behind the main building fronting Beardy St. You can walk through the main building to get to the Library. The **nearest car park** is immediately behind the Library building with **entry from Rusden St.** beside the Automotive Building. The Seminar Room has **gas heating, accessible toilets and comfortable seating.** It has up to date electronic equipment for presentations and a small kitchen with an instant boiling water tap.



Kunzea parvifolia Dwarf form
Image: M. Hitchcock

Become a member and save!

Did you know that there are a range of discounts available to members? Tell your friends and urge them to join our group.

Armidale & District members only

All Mole Station plants at the **APS stall** at the Mall Markets and our annual plant sale. At \$2.00 per plant discount, you can easily save your annual subscription each year. ([25% discount](#))

All members of APS-NSW

Cool Natives, 16 Hitchcock Lane Armidale 2350 Ph. 6775 1139. ([10% discount](#)) Specialist in Frost hardy plants, Correas, New England Flora Online catalogue coolnatives.com.au Open by appointment. Selling at Farmers Market/Uralla Market/Mall Market/Mail Order Free delivery in Armidale

Glenbrook Native Plant Reserve, Great Western Highway, Glenbrook 2773 Ph (02) 4739 4465. Sat, Sun, Wed. 12noon-4pm. 10% discount to members Web: www.apsbluemtnsgroup.org

The Wildflower Place, 453 The Entrance Rd, Erina Heights 2260. Ph (02) 4365 5510. 5% discount - tell staff before purchase

Wombat Gully Native Nursery, 1729 Coss Creek Rd, Rylstone 2849 Ph (02) 6379 6202. 5% discount

Mildura Native Nursery 10% discount on the purchase of any native plants or other products including the Watertube ordered online at www.nativenursery.com.au

Leeanne Neal at Newcastle Wildflower Nursery, 260 Lake Rd, Glendale 2285 Ph (02) 6379 6202. 10% discount

A.R. Native Plant Nursery, 177 Terania Ck Rd, The Channon NSW 2480 (far north coast) Ph (02) 6688 6365

10% discount Fri/Sat/Sun 9am-5pm other times by appointment

Bonney Hills Garden Centre, 1055 Ocean Drive, Bonney Hills 2445 Ph (02) 6585 5764 10% discount on all plant purchases

All Greengold Nurseries (except landscape materials or discounted stock) see www.greengold.com.au for location details etc.

Annangrove Grevilleas 98 Annangrove Road, Kenthurst 2156 Ph (02) 9654 1380. 7 days 9am-5pm

Florilegium: The Garden Bookstore 65 Derwent St, Glebe 2037 PO Box 644 Rozelle 2039. Ph (02) 9555 8589.

7 days 9am-5pm. 10% discount

Forests NSW Nurseries 10% discount on all potted lines. West Pennant Hills, Muswellbrook, Gunnedah, Wagga Wagga, Narrandera, Dubbo & Forbes For details see <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/forests/business-services/nurseries>

Sydney Wildflower Nursery, 9 Veno St Heathcote NSW 2233. Ph (02) 4739 4465. Sat, Sun, Wed. 12noon-4pm. 10% discount. Web: www.sydneywildflowernursery.com.au

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM for Australian Plant Society (ABN 87 002 680 408)

MEMBERSHIP TYPE: (please tick appropriate box)	Annual Fee	Concession
<input type="checkbox"/> Single	\$50	\$42
<input type="checkbox"/> Joint (two adults at the same address)	\$58	\$50
Concession applied for:	<input type="checkbox"/> Limited Fixed Income	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Time Student

PERSONAL: Joint members please complete a) and b)

a) Mr Mrs Miss Ms Dr other	b) Mr Mrs Miss Ms Dr other
Given Name(s):	Given Name(s):
Surname:	Surname:
Postal Address:	
	Postcode:
Tel: Home ()	Work: ()
Fax: ()	Email:

Please return form with payment to: **Membership Officer, APS Armidale Branch, PO Box 735, Armidale NSW 2350**

PAYMENT: \$..... is enclosed by:

- ☐ Cheque, payable to APS Armidale Branch
- ☐ Money Order, payable to APS Armidale Branch
- ☐ I do **NOT** wish my contact details to be made available to other members. Signature:

If not able to be delivered, please return to:
Armidale & District Group, PO Box 735, Armidale NSW