

PLANTS AND PLACES IN TASMANIA

HENRY A. VAN DER STAAY

P.O. Box 181

Moonah, Tasmania 7009

Australia

Tasmania is the smallest state in the Australian Commonwealth with land area half the size of Alabama. It is an island state situated 43° south, which gives a very mild and even climate. In Hobart the temperature in winter occasionally drops to 32°F at night and averages 55°F during the day. In summer we have a few days over 100°F, but temperature averages 73°F. The main disadvantage is the high cost of transport to and from the mainland.

Tasmania landscape is very mountainous with some spectacular scenery. The west coast with its mountain ranges receives up to 180 inches of rain yearly, while in the eastern part the rainfall is down to about 20 inches.

In the 1800's Tasmania was an English penal colony. It is now a busy commercial state. Hobart, the capital, is famous for its yachting. Copper is mined around Queenstown, and the sulfuric acid associated with the mining activity has killed much of the vegetation in the vicinity of the mines.

Our own nursery occupies about 20 acres. Two of our special interests are solar heating and tissue culture. We are using solar-heated water to warm our benches and have been very encouraged by our results. Ferns are our main tissue culture crop, especially the golden Boston fern, which is very popular in our country. We also propagate rex begonias, syngoniums, anthuriums and a few other herbaceous plants by tissue culture. Daphne is the only woody plant we are propagating in this way. There is some conifer propagation by the forestry commission, mostly of *Pinus radiata*; however, we are not propagating conifers.

In our fern tissue culture propagation we are careful to remove all agar by shaking the plants gently in warm water as soon as they are removed from the bottles. They are then planted in our regular peat:perlite mix and put onto the greenhouse bench with bottom heat. We maintain humidity by placing corrugated plastic sheets directly over the plants.

Native plants are very popular in Australian gardens, which makes much sense. In some cultivars a lot of hybridization is going on. Our conditions can be harsh, and introduced plants often fail to survive. One of our most popular families is that of the grevilleas, which are very hardy for our dry conditions. Some spectacular cultivars have been developed. These are some of the better ones:

- Grevillea* 'Poorinda Peter' — Evergreen tall shrub with new foliage covered in pink tips, light pink toothbrush flowers in spring
- Grevillea* 'Royal Mantle' — A beautiful prostrate cultivar
- Grevillea* 'Clearview David' — Evergreen small hardy grey-foliaged shrub with deep pink to red spider flowers in spring
- Grevillea* 'Crosbie Morrison' — Evergreen medium-growing shrub with grey foliage and deep red spider flowers in late winter and spring.
- Grevillea juniperina* (*prostrata*) — Evergreen medium shrub with dark green needle-like foliage and red or yellow flowers
- Grevillea juniperina trinervis* — Evergreen native flat-growing hardy plant that bears lovely greenish yellow flowers in spring
- Grevillea* 'Victoria' — Evergreen medium to tall shrub with narrow or broad leaves, deep red flowers in drooping clusters
- Grevillea hookerana* — Evergreen medium to tall shrub with narrow divided leaves and red toothbrush flowers
- Grevillea biternata* — Evergreen prostrate to medium shrub, divided narrow leaves, lacy white flowers in spring. Useful ground cover.

Another popular family is that of the acacia or wattle. These come in all types from large trees to dwarf shrubs. Their main flowering time is late winter.

- Acacia baileyana* — Evergreen small tree with silver-grey fern-like foliage, golden yellow flowers in winter Cootamundra wattle
- Acacia drummondii* — Evergreen small to medium shrub with small fern-like leaves, yellow rod flowers in spring
- Acacia boormanii* — Evergreen medium to tall shrub, narrow foliage, small yellow flowers in profusion, early spring.

Other popular natives are:

- Leptospermums* or tea trees — Evergreen medium compact shrubs with flowers from white to pink and red, mainly flowering in spring
- Banksias* — *Banksia ericifolia* — Evergreen tall shrub with small leaves, large cones of amber to reddish flowers in spring
- Callistemons* or bottle brushes — *Callistemon citrinus* — Evergreen medium shrub with clusters of pinkish-red bottlebrush flowers at ends of branches There is a great deal of breeding being done in this group
- Mintbushes* — *Prostanthera ovalifolia* — Evergreen tall shrub, narrow-oval leaves, mauve-purple flowers in profusion in spring.
- Prostanthera rotundifolia* — Evergreen small to tall shrub, rounded small leaves, lilac flowers in spring
- Hardenbergia violacea* — Native evergreen climber with twining stems, lilac pea-shaped flowers in spring. 'Happy Wanderer' cultivar has been especially popular.
- Boronia megastigma* — One of Australia's most popular flowers Small evergreen shrub, fine foliage, yellow sweetly-scented flowers in early spring.
- Boronia heterophylla* — Small shrub with unusual prostrate, small leaves, blue flowers in spring This makes a very showy ground cover.
- Lithospermum humifusum* — Small shrub with unusual prostrate, small leaves, blue flowers in spring This makes a very showy ground cover
- Hibbertia procumbens* — Evergreen small shrub, narrow leaves, yellow flowers.

A new hybrid golden diosma, *Diosma* 'Eureka' — Evergreen shrub, fine golden foliage with white flowers.

Eriostemon myopotoides — Wax flowers — Evergreen medium shrub with light green fragrant leaves, pink buds and white flowers winter and spring.

Pimelea rosea — Evergreen small to medium shrub, glossy green leaves, heads of bright pink flowers in spring.

These plants are drought-hardy but are sensitive to high summer humidity. They grow successfully where the climate is favorable for calistemon. Seed for most of the non-hybrids is available from seed dealers in Australia.

FLOWERING TREES OF AUSTRALIA

MARCUS A. PETERSEN

Dannebrog Nurseries Pty. Ltd

51 Braun Street

Deagon, Queensland, Australia

The climatic regions in Australia vary considerably, from tropical wet in the north through sub-tropical, to temperate in the south, with isolated areas of intermediate climates. There are small areas of alpine climates in our snowy mountains, an area of Mediterranean type climate, and much desert in the interior of the continent. Consequently, Australia has a wide range of plants with differing requirements, though many have adapted to such an extent that they grow in a variety of climatic regions and conditions. We also have some that are very specific in their requirements, and many of these have not been brought into cultivation successfully at this stage.

Because of the extremely wide range of Australian flowering trees, I will consider only a small selection found in my state of Queensland and give you some idea of the climatic range in which they can be grown.

Acacia longifolia, Mimosaceae. Flowering: Bright yellow racemes in spring. Height: Approx. 3-5 m, variable. Habitat: Dry hillsides, well-drained soils. Climatic tolerance: Annual rainfall 500 to 1000 mm; temperature range 0 to 35°C. Propagation: by seed. A very graceful small tree.

Acacia peringusta, Mimosaceae. Flowering: Pale yellow in winter and early spring. Height: 3-5m. Habitat: Variable but often along banks of watercourses. Climatic tolerance: Annual rainfall 300 to 1400 mm, temperature range 5 to 35°C. Propagation: By seed. A very attractive small garden tree with lacy foliage.

Acacia podalyriifolia, Mimosaceae. Queensland silver wattle — Flowering: Bright yellow in winter. Height: 3-5 m. Habitat: Dry exposed well-drained hillsides in coastal areas, soils derived from sandstone in inland areas. Climatic tolerance: Annual rainfall 600 to 1000 mm, temperature range 0 to 35°C. Propagation: By seed.

Anopterus macleayanue, Escalloniaceae. Flowering: Spring to summer. Height: 15 m in nature, usually only 5 m in cultivation. Habitat: Rainforest, well-