



Australian Plants Society of Tasmania – Northern Tasmania Group

President's Annual Report for 2013

It is with pleasure I present the Annual Report for 2013 of the Australian Plants Society Northern Tasmania Group (APST NORTH).

Administration:

The Office-bearers for 2013 were:

President:	Janet Hallam
Secretary:	Sharon Percy
Treasurer:	Roy Skabo
Vice-Presidents:	Julie Nermut
Delegates to Council:	Julie Nermut, Jill Clarke
Nursery Manager:	Sharon Percy
Programme:	Gilly Zacks
Newsletter editor:	Louise Skabo
Publicity/Examiner:	Karen Johnston
Welcoming Officer:	Jill Clarke
Heritage Forest Garden:	Suzanne Talbot, Peter and Daphne Longman
Web master:	Trevor Yaxley
Librarian:	Gilly Zacks

As at December 31st our Group had 54 members compared to 55 last year. We had 5 new members which means 6 did not renew their membership from the previous year.

I would like to thank all the office-bearers for the work they have done, particularly Sharon Percy who took on onerous duties as both Secretary and Nursery Manager.

Nursery and Plant Sales

The operation of the group nursery at "Grassy Banks", Bridgenorth, is a key activity. In 2013 the nursery propagated enough plants to hold 2 plant sales, one in April and one in October. Gross takings from these sales totalled \$2559 an increase of \$658 from a single sale in the previous year.

During the year attendance at the monthly propagation sessions and the many extra sessions required during pre-sale periods, has been excellent. As I mentioned in my previous annual report I commend these sessions to all members. They are industrious, educational, rewarding and fun.

After the October sale, the nursery propagators and helpers had an informal meeting to review the sales and to suggest ways we could improve their operation and presentation. A number of ideas were put forward and were instigated before the end of the year.

In June, in response to a call for native plants to help re-vegetate the burnt out Dunalley area, our nursery donated over 100 plants. This figure was augmented by donations of plants from at least 2 of our members' private propagations bringing the total to over 140 plants.

Again our Group is indebted to the dedication of Sharon Percy our nursery manager, who organized the sales. In Sharon's absence from May to August, members rallied to check on the nursery between the monthly propagation sessions. Our Group is indebted to all the members who willingly filled the gap.

Programme

The 2013 meeting night programme has been varied and interesting, with a mix of speakers and club nights where members provide or partake in educational activity. Topics covered by speakers were:

Sequencing of the Eucalypt genome – *Dr. Rebecca Jones*
The Rubicon Sanctuary : experimental work in species management – *Phil Collier and Robyn Garnett*
Travelling Coopers Creek in a tinnie - *Helen and Mick Statham*
Weeds in Agriculture : any lessons for bushland – *Phil Reader*
Native plants for verges and corridors - *Les Hodge*
Mapping *Thismia rodwayii* – *Mark Wapstra*
'Target' species of fungi – *Roy Skabo*

At the August and November meetings Prue Wright designed inventive educational exercises firstly, to challenge our understanding of plant habitats and secondly, to sharpen the observational skills needed to re-assemble species from a jumble of various plant parts.

Each meeting featured a "Plant of the Month" segment by members.

Our group's photo competition was held at the 2013 end-of-year dinner. There were many entries in the 3 categories: plants, places and people - with the photos of high quality.

Thanks are due to Gillie Zacks for arranging speakers and to Prue Wright for her educational challenges. Together they have provided our group with an excellent year's program.

Field Trips and Garden visits

Throughout the year several field trips and/or visits were organized. These included:-

Final visit to Whish-Wilson garden at Batman Bridge
Visit to Rubicon sanctuary and Hawley Nature Reserve
Searching for *Thismia rodwayii* in the Meander valley
Plant searching on Pitt's land at Greens Beach
Visit to the Habitat Nursery, Blackwood

Publicity

One key to our success as a community group rests with well targetted and well-presented publicity. APST North has performed well on 3 counts:-

1. Monthly articles in the *Examiner's* gardening columns.
Now written by Karen Johnson, the monthly articles in the *Examiner* have continued to great effect. We were fortunate in not just having Karen's expertise but also in having the *Examiner* print an accompanying meeting notice. All the articles are archived on our Web site under the link "Plants of the Month".

APST North thanks Karen for undertaking this invaluable task on its behalf.

2. APST North Web-site

Our web site, www.apstasnorth.org was developed a few years ago. It received numerous hits and generated inquiries from both home and abroad. Its presentation was and is impressive, and it provided an excellent public front for our group as well as being a good resource for our members.

We thank Trevor Yaxley for his work.

3. Shirt Logos

In 2012 the Northern Group designed an embroidered logo, using the APST Inc. badge. Many members had it embroidered onto polo shirts and other tops which were worn at public events such as the plant sale. It proved to be a simple and yet effective way of publicising APST North. Sharon Percy first proposed this initiative and we thank her for the quite considerable work involved in seeing it through.

Heritage Forest Garden

The plants in the Tasmanian Garden in the Heritage Forest area near the Caswell Street entrance are really starting to mature now and in spring there was a fine floral display. During the year over a 100 new plants were planted by Habitat Nursery under contract to the Launceston City Council. Many well-attended working bees were held during the year.

Two people deserve praise with this initiative – Lynne Mockridge who has persevered for years with this project and maintained the working relationship with the LCC Parks and Reserve Dept. I wish to record the Group's thanks to Lynne. Suzanne Talbot's quiet and constant contribution to the garden's maintenance is also noted with gratitude from the Group. Lynne has notified the Group of her wish to step back from co-ordinating HFG responsibilities in 2013.

Conservation

Conservation of native flora is one of the objectives of the APST. While our group has not undertaken projects in its own name, it should be noted that many community groups undertaking such work are often co-ordinated by our members, the latest being the formation of the Friends of Punchbowl Reserve, instigated by Roy Skabo. Other groups concerned with conservation of native flora and coordinated by our members are: Friends of the Tamar Wetlands, Friends of Machen's Reserve and Friends of Trevallyn Reserve. There are possibly others in the Tamar Valley also. Collectively the work they do is vitally important.

VALE

It was with great regret and sadness that APST North learned of the death, in November, of **John Simmons OAM**, who was a life member and foundation member of APST Inc. His expert knowledge, tireless work and warm friendliness earned him the utmost respect from all our members.
He will be greatly missed by us all.

I thank you all for your support in my role as President this past year, but particularly Sharon Percy for her unwavering energy and positivity and Trevor Yaxley for the expert and professional way he reported and presented Group finances for many years.

Janet Hallam (President – APST Northern Group)