



AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY TASMANIA Inc. NORTHERN GROUP

PRESIDENT
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President's Annual Report for 2018

It is with pleasure I present the Annual Report for 2018 for APST Inc. Northern Group.

The Office-bearers for 2018 were:

President: Louise Skabo

Vice-President: Roy Pallett

Business Secretary: Peter Dowde

Minutes Secretary: Noel Manning

Treasurer: Rosemary Verbeeten

Delegates to Council: Jill Clark & Lynne Mockridge

Nursery Manager: Janet Hallam

Programme Coordinators: Roy Skabo, Janet Hallam & Gilly Zacks

Newsletter Editor: Kay Pallett

Membership Liaison: Jill Clark

Tasmanian Native Garden at HFG: Daphne & Peter Longman & Suzanne Talbot

Web master / Social Media: Karen Manning / Louise Skabo

Publicity: Janet Hallam

Librarian: Janet Hallam

Strategic Planning Committee: Margaret Killen, Roy Skabo, Janet Hallam & Julie Nermut

I would like to thank all those members who regularly contributed to our Group in 2018 by attending meetings, presenting Plant of the Month and Club Night talks, volunteering at the Group Nursery, Tasmanian Native Garden, Blooming Tasmania, preparing supper, and participating in excursions and the Members Get-together. We have a vibrant and active Group and I am impressed with the friendliness and cooperation between our members. As President, I have appreciated your support as there was always someone who would put up their hand for an extra job whenever required.

Especial thanks go to those members, listed above, who gave their time, talent and energy to be office bearers of Northern Group. Peter Dowde composed thoughtful letters to thank guest speakers, was dependable and timely arranging Business Meetings and safeguarded our records. Thanks go to Noel Manning for stepping up and becoming our new Minutes Secretary to document the all important record of our Society's activities. We could not have had a more trustworthy and accurate Treasurer than Rosemary Verbeeten and Roy Pallett was an experienced and steadfast support for advice as Vice President.

Several of our members are to be commended for their commitments to APST Inc. Council and to ANPSA. Margaret Killen has been President of APST Inc. Council for two years as well as heading up the Strategic Planning Committee. Rosemary Verbeeten is Treasurer to APST Northern Group, APST Inc. and, till the September National Conference in Albany, WA 2018, Treasurer to ANPSA. Our two Council delegates, Jill Clark and Lynne Mockridge, have also been travelling to meetings in Ross four times a year, on our behalf, for many years.

2018 began with the National Conference of Australian Native Plants Society (Australia) in Hobart. It was a brilliant success in no small part due to the organisational skills and vision of Margaret Killen as Conference Convenor and all the other APST Group members including Northern Group members who played a role, notably, Jill Clark. These National Conferences are an opportunity to learn so much about native plants in all Regions of Australia and to meet like-minded people who care for the environment.

Membership

NG expanded the position of Welcoming Officer in 2018 to Membership Liaison Officer. The reason was to improve communication with our members and knowledge about their needs and interests, particularly pertaining to new members. A focus on membership and communication is a current goal of APST Inc Strategic Planning Committee. Jill Clark has expended time and effort into pursuing these objectives and has developed ideas for further improvement in 2019. Our NG membership was listed as 75 in December 2018 and it is encouraging to see many new members becoming active participants in our various activities, in no small part due to Jill's liaison efforts.

Nursery and Plant Sales

Our Group Nursery has been at Windsor Community Precinct for two years now and it has developed into an excellent facility due to the generous space allowed us by the West Tamar Council and their initial assistance but mainly due to the tireless hard work, capable organisation and thoughtful input of Janet Hallam, Nursery Manager for the past year. She has, as needed, been assisted by an informal committee of Sharon Percy (the initial and previous talented Manager of APST NG Nursery), Julie Nermut, Gilly Zacks and Colin Hallam. The Group has spent a further \$1540 on improvements at the facility in 2018.

As our Group's only income source, the plant sales from our nursery are vital and sales in 2018 broke all previous records, totalling \$7,803. Two bumper sales were held at Max Fry Memorial Hall with these sale days now recognised by the Launceston community as the means to acquire quality and diverse species of native plants. We appreciate the time, effort and good management by Janet and the many members who happily assisted to make these excellent promotional and financially successful sale days.

The monthly propagation sessions were very popular with an average of about 14 and up to 19 enthusiastic members attending and always a friendly, congenial atmosphere.

Attendees learnt propagation techniques, to identify native plant species and how watching tiny cuttings grow into strong, healthy plants (over two thousand of which were sold in 2018) was very rewarding. In February 2018, the media star of ABC's *Gardening Australia*, Costa Georgiadis, visited the West Tamar Council's Windsor Community Precinct which is landscaped with Tasmanian native species by the talented Tony Roberts. While there, Costa also visited the APST NG Nursery and was duly impressed with our John Simmons shade- house, our propagation set-up and the unusual and endemic species being grown.

Programme

Another essential activity in furthering the aims of APST Inc. as well as encouraging large membership and general public attendance at our monthly meetings, was having our innovative Programme Committee organise a diverse range of expert guest speakers, Club Nights and excursions. Researching, networking and contacting knowledgeable and inspiring speakers is time consuming and our dedicated committee of three, Roy Skabo, Janet Hallam and Gilly Zacks tried to cater for the range of interests of our members. The 2008 presentations listed here, were of a high calibre, often fascinating and all speakers expanded our knowledge and understanding of our natural world. Thanks go to Group members who contributed to the 2018 programme – we are lucky to have many erudite members.

March: Louise Gilfedder: "Montane Grasslands of North West Tasmania" – Louise offered to lead us on a grasslands excursion which occurred in January 2019.

April: Micah Visoiu: Flora of Alkaline Pans in Tasmania's World Heritage Area"

May: Christine Howells: Dessert Plants of Central Australia" (Hobart Member)

June: Club Night: Theme: "Plant Seed Dispersal Methods": (all members)

Roy Pallett: The Evolution of Seed Dispersal

Noel Manning: Wind dispersal – Dandelions and Puff Balls (with great videos)

Louise Skabo: *Acacia melanoxyton* and Myremecochory –seed dispersal by ants

Maragret Killen: Wollemi Pine – monoecious- wind dispersal of seeds

Janet Hallam: Aerodynamic Principles of seed dispersal by wind- *Hakea petiolaris*

Kay Pallett: The Beauty of Seeds – a slideshow

July: Margaret Brock: " Wetlands - Life at the Edge"

August: Club Night : Bruce Pike: "Symbiotic fixation in Plants" and

Mick Statham: " *Eucryphia* Genus" (both members)

September: Ian Thomas: " Paleobotany of North East Tasmania" (NG member)

October: "Fred Duncan and Mercedes: "Southern Connections: The Flora of Patagonia and our Continent"

November: Sue Murphy: "Raising Rarity: exploring the horticultural potential of rare and threatened Victorian wildflower species".(our Guest Speaker from Melbourne).

Plant of the Month:

We thank those members who exerted themselves to prepare informative and well illustrated presentations at each meeting:

Roy Skabo: *Banksia spinulosa* var. "Birthday Candles"
Rosemary Verbeeten: *Eryngium ovinum*, blue devil
Louise Skabo: *Aristotelia peduncularis*, heartberry
Peter Dowde: *Banksia baurei*
Peter Longman: *Cassytha sp.doda*
Roy Pallett: *Exocarpos cupressiformis*, cherry tree
Jill Clark: *Richea dracophylla*
Daphne Longman: postponed PoM till 2019
Julie Nermut: *Boronia molloyae*

Excursions and Garden Visits

Roy Skabo and Janet Hallam explored opportunities for members to pursue our Society's objective of appreciating native plants in their natural environment as well as appreciating the efforts of some private land owners to help conserve our natural flora. A few suggestions came from members and a guest speaker but this had to be followed up with hours of planning including two reconnaissance trips to unknown properties to ascertain their suitability. This took time, energy and money.

The following field trips were held in the year 2018 to January 2019:

January: February Plains, near Arm River NW Tasmania

July: Fern Foray at Launceston Field Naturalists field Centre at Skemps NE Tasmania

September: Glengarry private property organised by APST NW Group

October: Rocka Rivulet (Helen Tait's property) and Bluff River Gorge near Buckland SE

October: Garden visits to four members' properties in and near Launceston

November: Members Get-together at Camp Banksia, hosted by NW Group

November: von Bibra private properties, Mt William NP and Ansons Bay, NE Tasmania

January'19: Surrey Plains Montane Grasslands with Louise Gifedder (Forico managed properties in NW Tasmania).

January: February Plains postponed till Jan 2020 due to extreme heat and fire danger.

Garden visits

"To encourage the establishment of gardens in all types of soil and climate for the preservation of the flora of Australia" is a stated objective of our Society. We thank those members who opened their beautiful, largely native gardens to other, very appreciative, Northern Group members. It was an enjoyable two day event with two gardens on the East Tamar owned by Daphne and Peter Longman and Margaret and Jon Hosford followed by the West Tamar gardens of June and Ross Mezger and the newly established garden of Rosemary and Al Verbeeten. A special thanks to Margaret Hosford who efficiently organised this successful event.

Tasmanian Native Garden at Heritage Forest, Launceston

Without the past persistence of Lynne Mockridge and ensuing dedication of Peter and Daphne Longman and Suzanne Talbot, this project may have never developed into the

showcase of Tasmanian native plants that it is today. Throughout the year but particularly from late winter through early summer, it is a blaze of colour and is certainly an example of “establishing gardens in all types of soil and climate for the preservation of Australian species”, as in our constitution. Peter diligently attended meetings with the City of Launceston HFG Advisory Committee and finally succeeded in getting the path from the lower HFG to our previously isolated native garden. We will aim to further enhance this link in 2019 although this Committee is now disbanded and we will need to seek new CoL contacts.

During the year, scores of new species were planted, older plants removed, lawns regularly mowed by member, Ivor Conkie, and regular working bees for maintenance were very well attended. It is always a pleasant social gathering with Suzanne and the Longman’s tasty morning tea treats and convivial discussion. Costa Georgiardin visited the garden in September and was duly impressed with the concept and the outlay.

Newsletter, Website and Facebook

The Northern Group Newsletter, published quarterly on our website, is a real bonus for our Group. It synthesises the valuable information we hear at our monthly meetings from eminent botany guest speakers and member knowledge. Reading the well written precis and seeing the helpful graphics of these lectures plus members’ Plant of the Month presentations, was most enjoyable. It reinforced the educational content which at times is too much to take in at the time. We thank Kay Pallett for her skills in editorship.

Karen Manning continued to be our reliable and efficient Webmaster. APST Northern Group website information was promptly updated and she has provided valuable insights into needed improvements. 2019 will see an update to adapt to changes in technology but we will ensure we keep the website the user-friendly and well organised site which has served us well - set up some years ago by past-member, Trevor Yaxley.

Karen also assisted with setting up the APST Inc.NG Facebook page in September. Margaret Killen and Louise Skabo attended a government sponsored ‘Media-Ready’ session and Louise received two hours free tuition on Social Media for business promotion. However, more work needs to be done in 2019 to promote the Northern Group via social media to appeal to a younger demographic.

Blooming Tasmania

This Albert Hall event is a popular festival where our Society can promote native plants. Our thanks go to Bruce Chapman for his leadership and to Jill Clark, Rosemary Verbeeten and Lynne Mockridge for their valued input and continued enthusiasm. We appreciate the assistance of Nigel Keefe and Bill Carney and all the APST northern members who helped set up and do roster over the weekend. Southern and northern APST members arranged the popular posies which alert visitors to the richness of our native flora. It has proven to be a successful time for signing up new members and in 2019 we have been offered the privilege and financial assistance to do the festival’s main stage display.

Publicity

Janet Hallam was very reliable in submitting information about APST NG guest speakers and our upcoming plant sales to the Examiner via Les Hodge's 'Gardening' page. This publicity about the speaker and the topic along with our meeting venue was published weekly in the Examiner. APST NG thanks Les Hodge plus Janet's tactfulness and perseverance in enabling this. Roy Pallett organised the production and distribution of our plant sale road signs which have proven to be very effective while Janet also arranged radio time on the day of plant sales and these interviews definitely attracted buyers. As well, NRM North and sometimes, Tamar NRM, publicised our events.

Library

This is the fifth hat that Janet Hallam wears as a contributor to APST NG. Unbeknownst to many members, Janet spends time all alone at Max Fry Hall sorting, re-organising and ensuring that our collection of beautiful plant books and other documents is in good order. As a backup to electronic storage, Janet has completed a hard copy set of our newsletters as they contain so much information about the history of Northern Group. Archiving methods for all our documents will be considered in 2019.

Conservation

Conservation of our native flora is another important objective of our Society. Many of our members are involved in monthly working bees in "Friends of..." groups around the Launceston and Tamar Valley region. As well, members participate in annual conservation events like Clean- Up Australia, Ragwort Raids and Boneseed Blitz days. Members also participate in surveys for the Tamar Saltmarsh/Wetlands initiative and Roy Skabo organises many of the northern Tasmanian surveys for Threatened Species Tasmania. On these occasions in 2018 the participants largely consisted of APST NG and Launceston Field Naturalists Club members. These events were sometimes physically demanding but always rewarding and we thank those enthusiastic members for helping in this important work for our environment.

Strategic Planning Committee

Margaret Killen is to be commended for her outstanding work in initiating and driving the Strategic Planning Committee as President of APST Inc. The document not only outlines a vision for the future of our Society, but sets out practical and achievable steps for developing a stronger and better organisation. This committee had representatives from each Group and the NG members, Janet Hallam, Julie Nermut and Roy Skabo have consistently supported the concepts and given their time and considerations by attending the meetings. The Macquarie Point Project fits in with this plan and Margaret is in the process of setting up a committee of Hobart members to develop a proposal on how APST Inc. can be involved in this wonderful opportunity to promote native Tasmanian flora in the middle of our capitol city.