

IPPS

Sharing Plant Production Knowledge Globally

the Propagator



International Plant Propagators
Society (IPPS) Australia

International Plant Propagators' Society www.ipps.org.au
Australian Region - Newsletter Summer 2013 - No: 40

Being Prepared

The local community are still recovering from the loss of over 200 homes (with fortunately no casualties) following the October fires in the Blue Mountains area of N.S.W. near Sydney.

As much as we like to think our climate as uniform through the seasons, it just isn't. We live in a continent of storms, floods, cyclones, droughts, extremes of heat (and fires) and cold (with devastating late frosts). In 2009 there were devastating fires in Victoria, & 2011 saw tragic floods in Queensland.

We are all concerned about those who have experienced tragedy through the year. Some of our members families and friends were directly affected by the fires. More recently a severe hail storm affected many nurseries plastic covers in the northern areas of Sydney. Most businesses however recover from these events.

One of the small family nurseries next to Oasis nursery at Yellow Rock not only lost their igloos but their house and vehicles during the fire. If you live in areas with a risk of natural disaster then you need to have appropriate plans. At times the



question is do you stay or flee (if there is a safe way to escape)?

Sometimes we just find ourselves being there "fighting fires" or helping volunteers who have come to our assistance. John and Judy Teulon did just that at Mt Wilson, defending their property and helping to feed the volunteer fire fighters from across the country.

For employees these traumatic events may have lasting effects. On the tangible side some have lost their possessions and are now renting or staying with friends, and wondering what support they will get.

On the intangible side many may now be wondering if they should get away from such risky places. It is at times like these that help from various bodies is greatly appreciated by showing that someone cares.

Do you have in place plans based on a natural disaster risk assessment, and know what you will do if this happens? In the past IPPS members have stepped forward to give assistance in times of need. Something to think about over the Christmas break.

Bruce Higgs

THIS EDITION

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President's Comment



This report is for the Summer journal. If I had written it over the last two days it would have felt like summer but today it is cold, wet and miserable. The media talks about it as

though this is unusual but it isn't. This weekend is the Motorcycle Toy Run where thousands of motor cycle riders take toys into the Salvos to give out at Christmas. Every second or third year it is really wet. Yesterday was ten years since the hail storm did millions of dollars of damage in the Yarra Valley. We lost most of our tunnels and thousands of dollars of stock. This time of year is prone to wild swings in weather over most of Australia.

Most of the industry has had a good spring and there is some money starting to flow. People are generally in good spirits about the future. The decline in retail gardening seems to have stopped and there is a balance between independent and corporate stores. The large construction companies are working again and the housing sector is vibrant. So overall demand for plants is high.

One downside of the last few tough years is a reduction in qualified and experienced nursery workers. During the last decade there was a significant drop in young people undertaking training, formal and informal. We have had fewer enter the industry as general employees. All this has resulted in a shortage of skilled labour. Add to this the large number of elder folk who are retiring from the industry and the middle age workers who changed industry during the tough times and we have a real shortage of knowledgeable employees.

This has been reflected in our own membership where we have lost many members for a variety of reasons. We are not alone most trade and professional associations are seeing similar drops in membership. Also other IPPS regions have had a similar or larger drop in members. The International Board has worked hard over the past 5 years to address our falling membership and rising costs. They have done well and the negative issues have come to a halt. We now need to rebuild our base.

As professional horticulturists we should be encouraging young people to take up our profession. We must point out the real benefits of working in horticulture: long term career, reasonable earnings, clean environment, sustainable industry, great people and we are doing a good thing for the planet. It is critical that we refill our ranks and once we have a growing workforce we must start encouraging people to join IPPS.

Many of us have been members for years and have probably forgotten why we joined. I joined because my father told me it was "a must to do so". I quickly understood why. Since then I have been a keen advocate of our Society. I firmly believe we are the best association for disseminating information and developing the knowledge base of horticulture.

We are international, which I feel is often overlooked as a benefit of membership. Through our proceedings and websites we can follow what is happening all over the world. We can see that our issues are not unique and as such we can find a multitude of solutions. We can follow the trends in production, growing and plant selection as they change around the world. Cutting edge technology is often first spread through our regional meetings along with revisits to many classic tried and true methods.

What we do not do well is tell others what we do. We forget to ask people to join. We forget why we joined and how much we gained from membership, especially during our formative years in the industry. It is time to change this. I cannot think of any member I have met who is not passionate about the Society. They are all quick to tell each other how good the IPPS is, and it is time they told others. If my words don't inspire you just think of the sense of awe and wonder we see in the faces of the six pack members each year.

It is Christmas which is a great time of year. Yes the weather is warm and the days are long, but the real positive is the opportunity to spend time with families and friends. Over December and January we will catch up with people who we often haven't seen for a year. Take time to enjoy it. Take time to smell the roses, see the trees and taste the herbs. Have a great Christmas, a Happy New Year and take time out to recharge for 2014.

Clive Larkman

Executive Officer's Report

IPPS OFFICE

Even though the IPPS Office slows down at this time of the year, I am still kept busy tending to general office and in-house duties. Preparations for next years conference are also progressing well.



NEW ZEALAND CONFERENCE 2014

JOINT WITH AUSTRALIA

8th to 11th May 2014



'Lights, Camera, Action'

"Lights, Camera, Action" alludes to the number of big, blockbuster movies being made in NZ these days – one of the speakers is an art director for Peter Jackson of "Lord of the Rings" fame but it also refers to a range of exciting speakers on topics you can act on in your situation.

The cost is NZ\$350 which can be paid through the Australian office.

The conference will be held at MACS FUNCTION CENTRE

For further information go to www.ipps.org.nz

Make a note of this date in your diary.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Australian Region of IPPS has 200 Members.

A warm welcome to the following new Member:

Puthiyaparambil Josekutty, Clonal Solutions Australia Pty Ltd, 5970 Kennedy Highway, Walkamin QLD 4872

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS

Early in the New Year membership subscription renewals will be forwarded out to all Members. Your speedy remittance in this regard would be very much appreciated.

CONTACT DETAILS

To ensure Office records are kept 'up to date' I would appreciate it if Members could please notify me of any changed contact details. In particular, if you have changed your telephone provider recently, please remember to forward your new email address onto me at pjberry@iprimus.com.au or pam@ipps.org.au

Pam Berryman

IPPS Request for Feedback

The following is a self-explanatory request from the IPPS International Strategic Advisory Committee for member feedback. If any members wish to have any input to this

request, can they please email this to: IntDirector@IPPS.org.au

by **31st Dec '13**.

This will be summarised into a report & forwarded to the committee for review.

Please reply under the following headings;

- The role of the IPPS International and the role of the IPPS International Board
- Communications
- Website
- Digital Media
- Student Exchange programme
- International Proceedings
- Marketing Promotion
- Finance
- Education
- International Sponsorship
- Young Membership promotion
- AOB (any other business)

The Strategic Advisory Committee is an independent arm of the IPPS International Board and will treat each reply with confidentiality if requested.

Peter Lewis

Rod Tallis Award

It is that time of year again when our young horticulturists need to be nudged and encouraged to apply for this prestigious award.

It is not too late to undertake some short duration project or research that could see some worthy propagator at the start of their career gain an award that they can be proud of and mark the start of a successful career in horticulture. Past editions of "the propagator" may give some ideas for projects, and help is available if you are unsure about designing an experiment .

All that needs to be done is do the work and submit an application. Applications should be lodged by Friday 21st April 2014. Contact details for Peter Waugh or Michael Gleeson are on the IPPS website at www.ipps.org.au. Don't delay, or you will miss this great opportunity.

Six Pack

IPPS Australia this year offers the opportunity for 2 young propagators to come to the 2014 IPPS Wellington conference (8th to 11th May 2014), for no charge! The closing date for applications is Friday 15th March 2014.

If you have a passion for horticulture and would like to meet the best in the field, and learn plenty at the same time, then this is for you. In return for conference registration, accommodation and travel assistance, we ask that you support the conference organisers to make the event run as smoothly as possible... a fairly enjoyable task and nothing too hard.

To be a candidate you must be under 30 years of age, be nominated by your employer by completion of the Nomination Form and by completing the candidate information sheet available on the website at www.ipps.org.au

IPPS International Tour Report – Sept. 2013

A small contingent of the Aus. IPPS family gathered together in Seattle in late September with fellow members from around the world for the annual IPPS International Tour. This year the tour was hosted by the IPPS Western Region & was focused on the Pacific North West region of the USA. The first two days were spent enjoying the infectious tourism hospitality of Seattle, finishing with a panoramic night show of the city & relaxed social evening at the Space Needle.

Day Three, the beginning of the bus tour. The first stop was the Washington State University Arboretum visiting their new climatic zone gardens followed by a special IPPS nostalgia lunch within the gardens of Professor John Wott, a well-loved & highly respected horticulture icon & former long serving secretary of the International IPPS board. Sky Nursery was next on the tour. A traditional home & garden retail centre with many interesting Halloween displays & an extensive collection of plant species completely new to many.

La Connor, a historic waterfront village on the Swinomish Channel in the Skagit Valley was the overnight stop.



To clear the head of the evening follies, we paid an early visit to Sakuma Brothers Farms, Burlington. They are very large horticultural operation growing & processing strawberries, blueberries, raspberries & apples. Propagation & production of plants for the majority of their crops is undertaken in-house & they generously shared many practical ideas they are currently using in their tissue culture facilities & growing environments. Delegates were also treated to a delicate taste of the current crop they are developing in their region, *Camellia sinensis* – Green Tea.

Skagit Gardens Nursery, a premium quality producer of annuals & perennials as starters & finished product was the next stop. This nursery is a

An Aus. warrior gathering intel

prime example of what's happening in the American wholesale production nursery sector. **Mechanization, modernization, staff training & productivity** were the catch words commonly being used to emphasize the changes being undertaken to stay a viable business. It also provided a comparison gauge for the Aus. production nursery, we are three years ahead.

The afternoon was a time out period spent enjoying the rugged natural beauty of Deception Pass & the San Juan De Fuca Straights as we made our way to Port Townsend. We finished the day at Far Reaches Nursery, a plant 'geeks' fantasyland, a private collection of approx. 5000



Left: Chihuly Glasshouse, Seattle

Lower left: Seattle City from Space Needle

Right: It's Halloween time

Lower right: La Connor – a quaint waterside village



plant taxa. This is the place for the weird & wonderful stuff.

Manresa Castle, Port Townsend was the overnight accommodation & yes, the ghost stories were larger than life.

We had a chance next morning for a short wander through Port Townsend, a historic port build on maritime traditions. It has a large thriving school that teaches the art of building traditional wooden boats. Next stop was into the hills of the Olympic Peninsula to visit Chimacum Woods. Bob Zimmerman (a long time IPPS member) is a collector & producer of 'true to type' Rhododendron species from around the world. His collection is some 300 species strong with particular focus on Chinese species. Many of his collected species are now very rare & endangered in their natural environment due to human pressure.

Lunch was enjoyed at 'Windcliff', the residence of Dan Hinkley, a world renowned media horticulturist. Tacoma was today's overnight stop, an interesting, industrial city undergoing urban redevelopment.

The final day in this section of the tour was leisurely paced, starting at the LeMay Car Museum, a stroll through the historic Lakewold Garden Estate & finishing at the Higgins Restaurant in downtown Portland, Oregon. This restaurant was dedicated to the promotion of local produce. It was a memorable meal with a superb meal & local wines.

Our first day in Oregon saw a change in our tour captain to an elder statesman of the Western Region IPPS, Verl Holden. It was a day of enjoying the sights & night lights of Portland & Columbia regions. Pity the weather did not improve, the New Zealanders were feeling right at home in the cool, showery weather. Long rain jackets were well used.

The following day was spent in the heartland of nursery production for the Pacific North West. Nursery production is the No. 1 primary industry for Oregon State with a

substantial portion of the American nursery production particularly for ornamental trees being undertaken in this region. Visits to Bailey's Nursery, Carlton Plants & Monrovia Nursery were undertaken in very testing weather conditions.

These are big production nurseries, all over 300 hectares in size. All were undergoing modernization: investment into energy efficient infrastructure, research into improving staff productivity & labor cost savings. There were many practical low cost solutions on offer that would improve the cost efficiency of the basic nursery operations.

The final day of the IPPS International Tour after an overnight stop in Oregon City was a visit to a USA



Left: **Rhododendron seedlings** – Chimacum Woods

The view from Windcliff (Dan Hinkley garden)

Right: **Mt. Hood Ski Resort** – snowed next day



Baileys Nursery-Planting Aids for 'sticking' Cuttings

Portland Japanese Garden



Agriculture World Plant Collection site. A US government research station dedicated to preservation of all *Pyrus* (Pear) & *Vaccinium* (Blueberry) species & hybrids. Lunch was at a newly built school for training viticulturists. Bouquet wines is a fast developing industry for this local region.

Finally, now onto some 'real' work, the IPPS International board meetings.

It was a truly wonderful experience & privilege to attend this IPPS International gathering, pity the Aussies were well outnumbered by the Kiwis. The tour was well organised & the hospitality extended by our USA IPPS family was very welcoming, friendly & happy.

The next IPPS International Tour is to South Africa in late February '14. Tour organisers, Hans Sittig & Eloise Du Toit have posted the full itinerary on the IPPS International website.

Peter Lewis

Aus IPPS International Director

Preforma Plugs

Some years ago I heard Tony Ferraro speak about Jiffy Preforma plugs at an IPPS regional meeting at Swanepot Nursery. They offer a good solution for many cuttings. You may need to adapt your propagation misting to suit a coca based preforma plug system (and get used to what looks like wet media).

At one time I discussed our success with Kevin Handreck who suggested that even though very wet the air space around the plug allows sufficient oxygen at the base of the cutting.

Many thanks to our members who responded to Michael Gleeson's request in the last newsletter.

Preforma Plugs in Nursery Cutting Production

Introduction

In the many years of my nursery experience there have been many changes in the way we propagate plants.

Of the changes none has given more grief than the search for a medium that can be used successfully for a large number of species.

I won't go into detail of the trials that I have done in my search for a magic mix, needless to say I have tried almost everything there is available to the industry.

A number of years ago a new system came into the scene and so I decided to give it a go. This is the Preforma Plug from Jiffy and it has changed the way I now operate.

Advantages

- A clean system of propagation
- Harder to strike cuttings often give a better strike rate
- Quicker root production in many instances
- More confined roots so less transplant shock especially those plants with brittle roots
- No need for staff experienced in dibbling
- In species that do not strike evenly, cuttings are immediately returned to trays without treatment and allowed to form roots
- Quicker transplanting than bare root cuttings
- Can be adapted to mechanisation

Disadvantages

- Cost of plugs
- Foam trays create issues
- Discarded trays are not environmentally friendly
- Reused trays need sterilising and refilling
- Grading is an added expense
- Some plants have roots that stick to foam trays making them difficult to remove and sometimes will



break leaving empty plug in the tray

- Can take up more space than community pots/trays
- Hardening-off can be an issue

Conclusions

These plugs have been trialled on a wide range of plants that can be grown from cuttings. Natives such as *Acmena*, *Syzygium*, *Callistemon*, *Grevillea* are some examples. Exotics trialled include *Photinia*, *Camellia*, *Murraya*, *Abelia*, *Escallonia* and all have proved successful. The list is endless if plants can be propagated from cuttings then more than likely they will strike in Preforma Plugs.

These plugs are certainly not suited to all plants in fact we still propagate into community trays for some plants that have a uniform strike rate and are slow to strike.

Currently we use Preforma Plugs for around 75% of our cutting production and still going strong.

Would I recommend the use of these plugs?

Yes, but do some trials and see if they work for you as well as they work for us.

Tony Ferraro

Cutting Production Manager
Botanica Nurseries



Photo provided by Garden City Plastics

Preforma Plugs at Natural Area Holdings Pty. Ltd.

To this time we have only trialled the GCP jiffys. I don't know if Highsun offers benefits / different possibilities for some applications. We decided to try them after nursery visits at last Melbourne conference. We are also trying without misting, bottom heat with bottom moisture in a banded base. I will send photos with some captions. Reiterate that we are very happy with results. I suspect its not only the new tray product, but as usual a combination of factors but I have no doubt that they are making the substantial difference to our success.

The Natural Area nursery in Perth is producing 700,000 plants per annum for restoration / rehabilitation and natural landscape. The vast majority is from seed and division whilst cuttings are a small part of production, the outcomes from cuttings are important to our business and projects. Our history of cuttings propagation success has not been good, though it has gradually improved over the years. However, we have had a dramatic improvement since adopting the use of the peat in foam tray striking plugs.

We utilise electric heat beds with thermostat controls, misting (not fog) via a Mistmaster auto system, an evaporative cooler for temperature control at peak summer times and grow lights on time switches within a sealed propagation area.

The use of the striking plugs as opposed to an in nursery blended / soil based cuttings mix has been quite dramatic. It is early days and we have only been using the plugs for a few months but we have seen close to a 100% strike and consistently sound and early results. The cuttings seem to remain strong and disease free in this medium. We like the way the plugs in tray maintain spacing at the base between the plug and the bench surface. They seem to trap the heat but allow surplus moisture to avoid excessive uptake and rotting. The pot up process is aided by simply transferring the plug to pot without major root disturbance. The staff seem to respond well to the use of this product.

I am yet to do the cost / benefit but if I can get a strong result then its all about what we can do with it from there. You never know, I may well develop to enjoy growing from cuttings, but GRRRRR , don't bet on it yet. !!

David Hancock

2014 IPPS Pre-Conference Tour NZ 2nd - 7th May

Eddie Welsh, Philip Smith and Gus Evan are organising this trip traveling from Auckland to Wellington in time for the conference.

Cost: about NZ\$2000 per person, twin share (check the website for updates).

Registrations open **20th January**, and close **28th February**

Provisional Itinerary:

- Friday 2nd May: Gather in Auckland (1 night)
- Saturday 3rd May: Auckland to Waitomo (1 night), nursery visits.
- Sunday 4th May: Waitomo to New Plymouth. Nursery / garden visits



- Monday 5th May: Nursery and garden visits, New Plymouth (2 nights)
- Tuesday 6th May: New Plymouth to Palmerston North (1 night) Nursery and related visits.
- Wednesday 7th May: Palmerston North to Wellington (1 night).

On Friday **2nd May**, there will be a **pre-pre tour** open to all New Zealanders and Aussies which will be good chance to mix prior to the conference if you are unable to attend the full pre tour. Highlights will include Lyndale and Awa Nurseries plus a range of nurseries in the South Auckland area.

News

- HAL launched the 2020 Vision on the 7th of November in Sydney. The national initiative aims to increase urban green space by 20% by 2020. The campaign has been embraced by a wide variety of stakeholders and not only has great potential for the environment of our cities but should offer opportunities for the green-life industry. To learn more go to 2020vision.co.au
- In November at the NGINA awards night Valentino Bombadiere (Avondale Nurseries) received the Award of Merit, and Ramm Botanicals the best Propagation Nursery.
- Avondale Nurseries closes down at the end of December 2013, after many years supplying quality tubestock to the industry.
- The IPPS GB&I Region has changed it's name to the European Region.

Vale - Rex Trimble

Rex William Trimble (77) passed away peacefully on Sept. 23rd, 2013. A tremendous gentleman who always gave his utmost in every aspect of his full life. He was loved, respected and admired by all. Loving husband of Lesley (dec.) and Pat. Cherished father and friend to Wendy and Shane, Raelene and Michael, Sally and the Brown family.

Rex Trimble was a NGIV Life Member since 1998. After completing evening classes at Burnley he was offered a job at the college and he took over the in-ground fruit and flowering tree nursery. He bought **Faceys Nursery** and commenced there on the 4th August, 1959 the start of a great horticultural career. Rex Trimble was a person who touched the lives of very many people in the nursery industry and we note his passing with great sadness.

Vale - Ralph Shone

It is with much sadness that we advise of the passing of Ralph James Shone, aged 74 years of **Shones Nursery**.

Ralph passed away peacefully on Friday 29th November 2013, surrounded by his wife Irene and children Michael, Bradley and Amanda.

He was an extraordinary and gentle man who fought a hard year with courage, strength and grace.

Admired and respected by all within the industry he was loved so much, always willing to share his extensive plant knowledge with others.

Ralph was an Executive Board Member of the NGIV from 1999-2001 and also a keen member of the IPPS for many years.

He will be greatly missed by all that knew him.

Challenge

Hi readers, well this time I have a real plant propagation CHALLENGE for you. In fact it's a personal challenge that I have and I seek your help.

I hold the Plant Breeders Rights on a dwarf **Murraya paniculata** called "Mini Mike" and I want to graft it onto an understock to create a standard lollipop. I have already achieved this and used **Murraya** understocks. The problem with this understock is that it takes about four years to train them tall enough before grafting.

I have over some years now taken an interest in the history of Murraya and in my readings I became aware that before the nursery industry found that **Poncirus trifoliata** or tri stock as an understock for citrus, Murraya was used as a suitable understock to prevent 'Collar Rot'.

I now wish to determine whether the reverse will work, will Murraya graft successfully onto tri stock? I have determined that tri stock grows to the required height in half the time and will therefore speed up the production of standard plants.

These days I no longer have the facilities available to me to test this theory and I now put out the challenge to see if any of you might be interested in taking it on. So if you have access to some tri stock and a Murraya set up a trial, better still get one of your younger staff to set it up with the view to doing a Rod Tallis paper. Even if the trial fails we want to hear about it. Suggest you try both grafting and budding. If this works for you there might be a good market for you.

Michael Gleeson

Newsletter Editors Comment

I wish all our readers a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Pre Conference tours are not only a chance to see things not on the "tourist route" but also meet some great people and make new friends. Enjoyed reading the report from Peter Lewis.

Don't forget to encourage a young person you know to apply to be a 6 pack member, or apply for the Rod Tallis award.

If you are not already a member join up to the region's facebook site - search for "**International Plant Propagators Society (IPPS) Australia**" and start contributing by "liking" it.

Don't forget that this newsletter and some past copies are available on the IPPS website at www.ipps.org.au and pass your extra copy of the newsletter around at work.

Bruce Higgs - editor
"the Propagator"

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Dr Graeme Smith recently received his 2013 **Anita Boucher award** for best paper on 'Greenhouse Technology-Future Gazing' at the Melbourne conference. This award is supported by Hort Journal.