



# the Propagator

International Plant Propagators' Society  
Australian Region - Newsletter May 2005 - No: 6

## 2005 Mildura Conference - A Passion for Propagating

Mildura was yet another great conference. It was Michael Gleeson who encapsulated the thought of many with the word of "Passion".

This was true for members there who had the opportunity to listen to the various speakers and their passion for their area of interest. The visits to local nurseries, and hearing the passion of living in this inland Australian environment using some cutting edge technologies.

We experienced this again at the Inland Botanical Gardens, where Peter Smith told us about the efforts of a few local people and various supporters in creating a significant Botanical Garden in a very harsh environment. Yes we did spend a fair bit of time listening to the various speakers, but it was the site visits that helped give us a feel for Mildura. The town depends on irrigation for it's prosperity. Practices are changing to cope with salinity. The combined experience really gave you a feel for the area.

What an exceptional learning institute local nurseryman have now to train in at Sunraysia TAFE! As well as flexibility of courses and in-house training, students are taught in buildings their instructors designed to be in harmony with the environment. The water feature and landscaped gardens include many native species in different habitats. Some of the energy saving features of the buildings must have some application in cooling of greenhouses. Cooling of the buildings was simply accomplished by blowing air through pipes in an adjoining hill constructed for the purpose, as well as a screen from the road. A massive earthen wall also helped as a heat sink for the main lecture theatre.



With all of the this going on the organisers set aside time for people to chat, because this is where networks are built that last, not just for the conference but into the future. I know, I have benefited from advice after the conversation turns to "how do you do that". There are several lifetimes of propagation experience available to help with your problem. What value could you place on that? Members want to share this experience, because of their passion for propagation.

The conference also gives you the opportunity to step aside from your daily routine and look at what others are doing with basically the same tools. New opportunities come about . I have in the past followed some of these up and developed some things of great future value to our enterprise.

Get involved, start thinking about that paper you could give in Brisbane next year, or Dubbo (NSW) the one after. If you need help then talk to someone in your network, a NIDO, the editor (Leisa) or Pam Berryman.

- Bruce Higgs

editor "the Propagator"



*Some sharing going on in a quiet moment*

## Secretary /Treasurer's Comment

### Mildura Conference

Every year the conferences get better n better. Thank-you to everyone involved in ensuring this years conference was a huge success. By the feedback received to date other Attendees also agreed that this years conference in Mildura was very entertaining and informative.



### Calling all camera buffs.

We are in the process of putting together a collage of photos onto our website for other Members to access so I am inviting all you camera buffs to forward your pictures to me so that they can be put onto the website. My email address is: [pjberry@iprimus.com.au](mailto:pjberry@iprimus.com.au)

### Membership

The International Board have closed their books off for the year. We have 213 financial Members for 2005 with 8 Members still to advise of their Membership. It is imperative that ALL Members please notify me of any changed contact details , so that I can ensure Office records are kept 'up-to-date'. Some Members change their telephone providers on a regular basis, so it is therefore imperative that e-mail addresses are also kept 'up-to-date'.



Membership fees will increase by 3% for 2006. Membership fees for 2006 will be as follows;

Currently the fees are;		3% increase;
Option 1 (Book) -	\$163.00	\$168.00
Option 2 (CD) -	\$146.00	\$150.00
Option 3 (Book & CD)	\$200.00	\$206.00
Option 4 (Membership)	\$111.00	\$114.00

### Brisbane Conference 18<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> May 2006

Next years conference will be held in Sunny Queensland in Brisbane from Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May to Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2006.... so pencil this date onto your calendar. This event is shaping up to be '**One not to be missed**'.

### Financial

IPPS is financially sound and we are on target with the budget.

*'Let the word of IPPS spread amongst us'.*

*Pam Berryman, Secretariat*

## President's Comment

This is my first report as president of The Australian Region of the International Plant Propagator's Society. I feel it a great honor as this is the best professional body in Australian horticulture. We have a tremendous culture of welcoming newcomers and assisting those that need help.



Unfortunately it is also Australia's best kept secret. We have not been good at spreading the word of the value of being a member. Every year I hear comments about who is speaking at the conference and whether it is worth attending. Yet we all know the real value of our conferences and the society is the information exchange through networking.

Our motto is 'To seek and share'. From this we are all able to learn from those who have been there for before and at the same time to help others avoid the need to learn from our trials and tribulations. With the motto we should give the message; 'you get back ten fold on what you give'. There is immense satisfaction in being able to help fellow propagators solve problems that have been bugging them for ages. However there is also great satisfaction when they return the favour or when by simply enunciating an issue you also see a new way of addressing it.

We, as a society, must continue to deliver this message. We must communicate with friends and associates in our industry and show them the value of membership. We need to increase our membership by inviting more people to join. We also need to expand our membership more into sectors other than nursery.

We need to do this for the society. With a larger membership base we are stronger and more financially stable and we have a much greater capacity to share knowledge and ideas. We also need to do this for Australian horticulture. As propagators we start off the plants that the amenity and production horticultural industries rely on. If we do our job well then they are profitable. If we don't then they will not achieve their aims. Similarly with the Society, we are able to bring in the young propagators and new entrants to horticulture and establish some basic principles. We can install a belief in the value of sharing. We can set the standard in plant nomenclature. We can engender a philosophy of striving for excellence and continual improvement. When we do this we will have a strong and vibrant industry that provides a rewarding career.

Our society is in good shape. It has been well stewarded over three generations by some of our greatest horticulturists. It has a proud history that I hope to continue. Greg set an agenda to develop pathways for young horticulturists into the Australian industry. We are already seeing the benefits of this. The six pack is really opening us up to the young growers.

My desire is to take the society to the industry, and therefore bring more fellow propagators into our family and to further develop the pathways for all propagators.

*Clive Larkman*

## **What the 6 Pack thought about the Mildura Conference**

After a busy four days, we the Aussie contingent of the 2005 “Yates six pack” have just stumbled back to our hotel room tired but happy at the end of a fantastic IPPS conference in Mildura.

We have sat down to write this article, but our heads are so full of new ideas, it’s hard to decide that to write. There were many highlights, however we have to start somewhere. The presentation by keynote speaker Dr Mary White was a definitely one of them. The depth and breadth of her knowledge was an inspiration to us, and to the rest of the IPPS members. Everyone spoke enthusiastically about her presentation she really set the scene for the whole conference.

Being part of the Yates six pack gave us a unique insight into the internal running of the IPPS and the huge undertaking that running such a quality event entails. It also put us in the spotlight and allowed us to meet some amazing individuals and icons of our industry.

We, the Yates six pack have come from a wide range of work places and because of this we will all utilize the knowledge we have gained in different ways. Getting to know the other members of the six pack, including the South African delegates has greatly enhanced and enriched our experience. We very quickly became a close knit team and are sure that we have made friends that will last the test of time, because from now till the end of time we will be known within IPPS circles as “ex six packers”.

We would like to thank all of the conference delegates for making us feel so welcome and valued. We also congratulate and thank in particular the Mildura locals on the organizing committee and IPPS board members.

This year we attended as first timer observers and non members (all but Daniel, who just signed up). Next year, without doubt, some of us will attend the Brisbane conference as full IPPS members.



*Lucille Drake (Kazimungi Nursery), Kuphumla Zense (Shadowlands Nursery), Daniel Mansfield (Mansfields Nursery), Nicole Squires (Salisbury Nursery), Jessica van der Werff (RBG Cranbourne), Mim Wright (Swinbourne TAFE)*  
**2005 Six Pack** Photo - Greg McPhee

We will take the IPPS motto “seek and share” to heart and will endeavor to live by this motto, as the members of the IPPS already do.

Thank you, we now go to catch up on some well earned sleep

*Nicky, Jess, Daniel and Mim (The Aussie contingent of the six pack)*

Well, I have arrived back home safely. My trip to Australia was mind-blowing to say the least. It was by far the most exhilarating three weeks of my life! I could not have imagined that it would be as informative as it was.

My family has questioned my career choice on many occasions, and I have always justified my choice by saying the following: “plant people are good people”. Well, I have never been more right about anything in my life!!!! I finally understand the meaning of “UBUNTU”.

So, on that note I am forced to make use of a normal, heartfelt, good old THANK-YOU!

*Lucille Drake Kazimungi Nursery*

I met Kuphumla and spoke to him on the tractor-train at the Inland Botanical Gardens. He thought that the conference was a great experience for him and the others. He certainly enjoyed his time in Australia.

Certainly Mr Bayer of Shadowlands was very proud that he had been selected. He also went on to say that “uBuntu” is a way of life and probably comes close to meaning “humanity toward others”. The Six Pack members certainly showed us plenty of this.

Thank you.

*Bruce Higgs*



## Yates - Supporting the Six Pack Scheme

As the Market Leader in Australia, Yates takes very seriously the development of the new talent for the successful future of Horticulture in Australia. Giving valid reasons for our youth to consider our industry as a long term career

path is vital for our collective resources and long term ambitions.

What better way to gain long term people to both the IPPS and the industry than showcase what is the best on offer and have the chosen six packers being a functional part of each years' conference.

If Yates can assist in making 'passionate propagators' through the Six Pack scheme then we have helped in a small way in the 'Seek and Share' motto of the IPPS.

*Robert Reynolds National Sales Manager, Yates*

## A Passionate lot of Propagators

Passion is that compelling force that makes us do things that other mere mortals only dream of. Passion was the word of the IPPS 2005 Mildura conference, it showed in many ways.

The newly introduced 'Youth from Africa' program contained plenty of passion. Two delightful propagators that were just bursting with desire to learn as much as they could from their Australia experience. Lucy and Kuphulma certainly got their lot and reports are that they still have yet to settle back in after the experience.

We also saw the IPPS passion when Michael Gleeson received his **Award of Honour**. Michael could hardly



contain the tears as his friend and compatriot Peter Ollerenshaw read the citation. Michael has been a long time member and mentor for many a young propagator.

The (now) Yates Six Pack experienced

how passionate the Society is about being inclusive of all. Some of the crew reported to me that they have never experienced a situation where their 'Heroes' of plant production would actually talk to them let alone give encouragement and assistance. They got plenty more than they thought possible.

The Mildura conference will be remembered for many things. One thing that sticks in my mind is the volunteers at the Botanic Gardens who give freely of their time. They worked hard to ensure we had a great meal, a tremendous ride on the train and that the gardens looked their best. The smile on Peter Smiths face at lunch said it all... that belief that what he and Lois had worked hard for was a reality.

Jac and Tineke Duiff, our Southern African guests reflected on their experience of attending an Australia conference. They spoke highly of the level of commitment Australians have to the Society. Jac in particular noted the enthusiasm, the intense discussion and the sharing of information. That's the IPPS passion, its what drives us to do greater things and long may it continue

*Greg McPhee*

## Fellows Special Award

Lila Barnes received the Fellows Special Award granted by her colleagues in the Craft of Plant Propagation recognizing her outstanding skills, forty-two years of achievement, and desire to continue in a leadership role.



## Rod Tallis Award

The International Plant Propagator's Society recognizes outstanding achievement by the younger part of our industry. The IPPS does this through the Rod Tallis Youth Award, presented annually to the most commendable achievement by a person under 25 who is working or studying in horticulture.

The 2005 Winner of the Rod Tallis Award was Naomi Diplock, with her study of shoot dieback of Geraldton Wax.



*Michael Gleeson, John & Judy Teulon, and Greg McPhee with the Award of Honour*

## Calendar Diary Dates:

**1 June 2005** - Brisb. Trade Day - 07 3275 3423  
**15-16 June 2005** - NGIQ Technical Field Days -  
Redlands Research Station - NGIQ 07 3277 7900  
**1-3 July 2005** - Queensland Home Garden Expo -  
Nambour Showgrounds Contact: 07 5441 4655  
**6th July 2005** - Brisb. Trade Day - 07 3275 3423  
**26-27 July 2005** - Spring Green Expo Hall 3 BCEC -  
Contact NGIQ 07 32777900  
**16 August 2005** - Toowoomba Branch Trade Day -  
Contact Lorraine Schiller 07 4636 1077  
**21-24 September 2005 Plant Tissue Culture &  
Biotechnology Conference**, Bold Park, Perth, Western  
Australia. Registration and call for papers now open!  
Contact: <http://www.congresswest.com.au/PTC>

*(if you have some dates for this please let me or Pam know)*

## Your Say

*I retired from the position of Head Teacher of Horticulture at Ryde TAFE in January 2004 as well as from active participation in the horticulture industry. The many enjoyable years I was a member of IPPS as well as the very many learned, highly skilled and above all, friendly people I met at various conferences and workshops are treasured memories.*

*I have long believed, and still believe, that if any young horticulturist must choose one organisation to join, then the one that will bring the most benefit in terms of knowledge, skills development and networking is IPPS.*

*Best wishes and encouragement to the Committee and to all the members.*

*Regards, Adrian Salter*

The electronic copy of Volume 18 Issue 1 of the Plant Varieties Journal has been published. The current journal is accessible from the IP Australia website at: [http://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/pbr/journal\\_download.shtml](http://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/pbr/journal_download.shtml)

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*There is a question that is often discussed at IPPS conferences, you know at those coffee or beer sessions, when people are sitting around Seeking & Sharing.*

*I have asked this question of many people on many occasions. The question I speak of is this.*

*Is there a benefit in placing nutrients in your cutting mix?*

*The answer I usually receive is all for it or dead against it. I am one of those all for it people. I always mixed Nutricote mini-prill at half the recommended m<sup>3</sup> rate to my mix. However I never ran an experiment to find out if this was beneficial. How many of us sway one way or the other on this matter have?*

*As we all know IPPS Australian Region have the Rod Tallis award each year, which is offered to the younger members of our industry in an effort to have some research presented.*

*Now here is a project you could offer to your younger staff members. Let them run the trials and see what they come up with.*

*- Michael Gleeson*

## Questions and Answers

This section will regularly include questions raised at the conference and others from email ([bruce.higgs@bigpond.com](mailto:bruce.higgs@bigpond.com))

Thank you so much not only for your well organized tour to Lake Mungo for the IPPS post conference tour, but for allowing us to share in your Aboriginal knowledge. Without it the visit would have been meaningless.

As promised, herewith the details as we (westerners) know of *Senna artemisioides*, previously known as *Cassia artemisioides*. The local common name from Ouyen in Victoria is "Bush Boronia". The local NSW common name is unknown to us at present, but I am hoping a native plant specialist and IPPS member may have the answer.

Your description of the plant for use as a pain and Arthritis relief, using small bunches of leaves, heated, and applied to the appropriate part of the body as a poultice, is very interesting and another example of our small (western) understanding of the huge range of plants used in Aboriginal culture.

My kindest regards, *Ian S. Tolley OAM CPAg*  
Ian, "Plants of Western NSW" lists the common name as The Silver Senna. Thanks again, *Peter Smith*.

We now have the ability to input new genera into the Australian landscape including plants genetically changed for salt tolerance. Where do you see these plants fitting into our need to stabilise or improve the macro landscape? How also do we provide adequate information to the decision makers (politicians/government) for science based decision rather than voter based? - *Robert Percy for Mary White*

*I would strongly object to any genetically altered salt tolerant plants being introduced into the macro landscape. However, I strongly support the planting of native salt tolerant species (such as salt bush) over wide areas. they can restore and revitalise salt affected regions and lower saline water tables, and they can be grazed by sheep (cell grazing) and produce extra special quality mutton and lamb. They can then plant other species, such as Eucalyptus etc.* - *Dr Mary White*

## Conference Recap

The conference papers were led by Dr Mary White, who spoke about adaptation. This was an interesting talk and gave us a lot of insight into the geological history of the area around Mildura.



Peter Radke, and Des Boorman spoke about propagation of Australian native plants. While Jacques Duif talked about the propagation of South African arid zone Lithops known as “flowering stones”.



Elizabeth Heij, from the CSIRO Sustainability Network presented the challenges we each face and potential shifts in horticulture. For more information see [www.bml.csiro.au/sustnet.htm](http://www.bml.csiro.au/sustnet.htm).



Chris Newell (Dept. Agric. WA) presented the benefits of IVS versus agar with Chamelaucium alliance microcuttings. They have found that Verticordia graft best onto *C. uncinatum*.



Steve Sykes (CSIRO) seems to really like his new jams made from hybrids of indigenous citrus species. The fruit certainly looks novel:

[www.australianfingerlime.com/varieties.html](http://www.australianfingerlime.com/varieties.html)

Jonathan Lidbetter (NSW Dept. Primary Ind.) presented work on grafting tissue cultured cuttings onto nursery grown stock.



Angus Stewart presented us with insights, and the challenge of breeding improved forms of Australian Native plants.

Dyllan McPhee impressed us with his irrigation engineering. Using minimal water though flood and dripper application to containerised plants, with recycled water from a sand filter.



From the costings provided by Bill Yiasoumi, sand filters appear to be the most cost effective means of

water disinfection for plant pathogens.

Stan Leach spoke further about his experience with recycled water (more on this in the next issue). Garry Heyne explained how they use technology and wetlands as part of their nurseries environmentally friendly recycling of water.



On the final day Alan Saunders explained how now after 13 years since first seeing it, they have commercialised green grafting of grapes. They are also now able to quickly bulk-up new clones for supply to customers out-of-season.



Allen Gilbert has written many popular “how to” books, and showed us his experience of grafting ‘long John’ grafts (2 cm thick wood with flower buds) using a clear plastic sleeve to cover the graft. Fruit were obtained the first year from grafted apple trees.



John Messina followed up with their experience of a Water-Wise efficient Waterbird sprinkler based design to irrigate container plants in their new shadehouse at Sunraysia. The water savings were impressive.



Tim Herrmann (Auscitrus) explained the Australian Citrus Budwood Scheme, while Paul Croxton talked about Australian grapevine improvement organisations. Robert Chin (NGIV) spoke about the difficulty of growing plants in hot conditions.

Naomi Diplock (Univ. Qld. School of Agronomy & Horticulture) explained that Aracnose was the most likely cause of Geraldton wax dieback. Unfortunately the most effective treatment before infection is not registered for this use in Australia.



The other speakers spoke well and passionately. The poster displays were also excellent. However, it would be good to see a few more exhibitors in the trade show next year.

## Nursery Tours

### **Boulevard Nurseries** <http://www.boulevard.com.au>

Their focus is on various methods of grapevine propagation, including dormant bench grafting, green cutting propagation, tissue culture and Green-Grafting (Micrografting). In addition, the nursery produces budded Citrus, grafted avocados, and a range of ornamental lines including Hydrangea, Chrysanthemum and Zantedeschia.

The technique of green micro-grafting of grapevines, initially developed in France and licensed in Australia to Boulevard Nurseries, requires constant supplies of glasshouse-grown, high quality propagation material.

Paul Croxton showed us their Aurora glasshouse. This is Italian-designed and constructed at the small village of Albenga, 70 kilometres north of Genoa. The Aurora glasshouse has number of features for rapid growth of grapevines:

- Ventilation is provided through vertically opening side panels and roof sections, which open completely to provide 70% venting.
- High structure - five metres to the gutters and another 1.5 metres to the ridge - enabling convection air movement to expel hot air efficiently.

The plant tissue laboratory at Boulevard Nurseries was established in 1997 as a means of rapidly multiplying plants, especially grapevines and ornamentals. It also forms an integral part of the Boulevard system by providing support with genetic engineering, virus elimination processes, plant breeding and maintenance of germplasm banks.



The Boulevard Nurseries employee is Michael Valente, Propagation Manager. Michael has a vast experience in propagation of a wide range of native and exotic plants from seed, cuttings and grafting. He was former manager of the Victorian Department Of Conservation and Environment's, Mildura Tubestock Nursery producing some 2 million trees annually for farmer, catchment management and landcare groups.

Michael has attained great results with *Daphne odora rubra* cuttings with a 95%+ success rate from late Spring cuttings and very high results of 90%+ from the deflasking of *Daphne* Tissue Cultured plantlets (as pictured) from Boulevard's in-house T.C. Lab..

- Paul Croxton

**Sunraysia Nurseries**, a wholesale nursery at Gol Gol near Mildura in the Sunraysia District. The nursery specializes in the production of Grapevines, Citrus, Olives, Avocados, Kiwifruit, Passionfruit and Pistachio.

John Messina was our guide through this production nursery. In years of high demand, the field nursery sets in excess of 2,000,000 grapevine cuttings, consisting of more than 100 varieties.

Lila Barnes showed us the container grown fruit section. She heads a team of dedicated people who produce Citrus, Grafted Grapevines, Avocados, Olives, Passionfruit, Quandongs and numerous other fruiting species. Citrus grafting was demonstrated in the tour.

I shouldn't forget our visit to **Sunraysia Institute of TAFE Centre for Sustainable Land and Water Management**, and the public gardens at the nearby **Lower Murray Water**. If you are in Mildura then it would be worthwhile looking at the TAFE buildings and landscaping. The public garden was constructed by students with sections of native and exotic plants as well as those chosen to give the impression of a rainforest in this dry area of Australia.

# The Australian Inland Botanical Gardens

After the AGM members were taken by coach to the inland Botanical Gardens for lunch and tour. Lunch was great, and we appreciated the effort of volunteers. After taking a brief stroll in the gardens I was fortunate to join a group being taken on a tractor-train ride around the gardens (148 ha). Peter Smith drove and enthusiastically provided the commentary. This is a real labour of love, as it is funded through patronage as a community project.



## Organisers Thoughts

One of the tasks in the wake of a conference is the compiling of evaluation sheets into a useable form. 'Evaluating the evaluations' as it were. It's no easy job. But as I sat and waded through a seemingly endless pile of paper, picking the eyes out of the compliments and criticisms, one thing kept coming through. It is the appreciation members and non-members alike have for the passion people share.

Words like "inspirational" and "fascinating" kept popping up. It seemed to be a key theme that people were taking away from the conference. I realized that the enthusiastic way people share their information is every bit as important as the information itself.

There were many aspects of the conference that people listed as their "highlights". Mary White's insight was a major one. Peter Smith's enthusiasm at the Botanic gardens was another. Every one of the paper presenters managed to 'touch a chord' with some of the audience. The 'get up and go' attitude of the Yates Six-Pack was again outstanding. And the commitment of Kathy and Alan in organizing everything was probably the most awe-inspiring effort of all.

It was great that so many people were able to take so much away from the conference. The stress and sleep deprivation that comes with organizing a conference pales into insignificance compared to the reward of being involved with such a great group of people. Thank you to all who participated in the Mildura conference. You helped make it the success it was.

- John Messina, of the Mildura Conference Organizing Committee



Top; people stop to admire the seed patterned gazebo ceiling (right), then on the way on the tractor train with Peter Smith driving. Below right; scenes from the Auction Photos Bruce Higgs

## EVENING EVENTS

The organisers at this conference lifted the bar for those to follow. Registration on the Thursday night was accompanied with a taste testing of new table grape varieties.



The mystery meal on Friday night turned out to be a dinner cruise on the *Mundoo*, one of the paddle-steamers that have made Mildura a tourist destination. So after a full day of sitting and talking we were able to watch the floodlit river banks move by, surrounded by the sounds of people letting their hair down and relaxing.

Our Conference Dinner in the Grand Ballroom on Saturday night was capped-off by "the auction", a great 'fun-raising' event.

Then on to some exhibition dancing and lessons for those willing to join in. It wasn't ballroom dancing though! I wonder how many remember the steps now, or will for the next conference?

