

# LASIANTHOS

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*Plectranthus excelsus*  
P.J. Foster, sp. nov.

# More Locations for *Plectranthus cremnus*

By Robert Miller

The article titled "*Plectranthus cremnus* - More found but still rare" by Dr. Barry Conn (Lasianthos No. 1), reported observations that the species occurred at sites other than those described in the type manuscript. The following short document describes three further locations found by the author and briefly outlines my ideas to conserve the species in the wild.

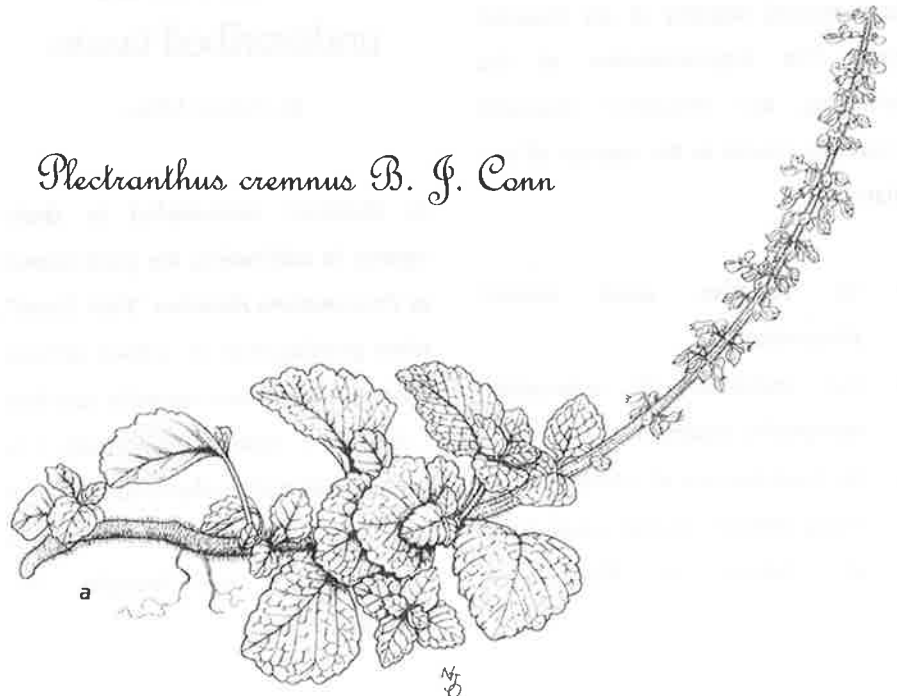


North Coast of New South Wales. The sites included Racecourse Delicate Headland, Big Hill and Queens Head, all south of the village of Crescent Head, east of Kempsey, NSW. At Racecourse-Delicate the species is locally common in the eastern portion of the headland, whereas at both Queens Head and Big Hill the species appears to be rare.

*Plectranthus cremnus* prefers to grow in skeletal soil at the edges, or in crevices of exposed rock on the windswept headland at Racecourse-Delicate. Implementation of a sympathetic management plan though, is essential to avoid *Plectranthus cremnus* becoming vulnerable or endangered at the site due to a number of factors.

Racecourse Delicate Headland is in a relatively "undisturbed" state, currently weed invasion is minimal, but Bitou Bush is steadily increasing. At the Queens Head site, re-inspected Oct 1994, Bitou Bush had gained the upper hand in many of the too few available niches where once small colonies of the species grew. The greatest threat to the species presently at Racecourse Delicate is over visitation. The area is a renowned fishing and surfing locality, scarred with numerous undefined walking tracks crisscrossing the headland. Indiscriminate access is most prolific in the skeletal soil habitat favoured by *P. cremnus* resulting in trampling of this diminutive soft herbaceous species.

*Plectranthus cremnus* B. J. Conn



Whilst on holidays in April 1993, I observed *Plectranthus cremnus* growing at three previously undocumented localities on the Mid -

*Plectranthus cremnus* appears to be in decline or is rare at most of the other locations where the species occurs. At the world class surf break of Lennox Head the species occupies a narrow band between a thick thatch of Kikuyu on the headland slopes and the basaltic boulder strewn foreshore. Although locally common in 1992, the species here is under threat by human trampling and exotic grass invasion. A proposal to plant rainforest species on the headland utilising sewerage effluent from the nearby ocean outfall south of Skennars Head is an interesting concept. Implementation, however, may promote luxuriant weed growth on the lower slopes, which in turn may engulf the species.

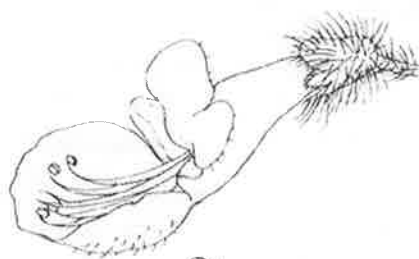
It is my opinion that, if *Plectranthus cremnus* is to survive in the wild, active management practices need to be implemented urgently at all recorded sites. The implementation of the following key mitigative measures would be crucial to the success of any plan:

- an effective weed control programme,
- the provision of appropriate interpretive materials,
- the formalisation of walking tracks which redirect visitors away from the habitat of *Plectranthus*

*cremnus* into more resilient habitats, and

- replanting and re-introduction program.

Priority should be given to two sites: Racecourse Delicate and Lennox Head, to ensure the survival of the species in the wild.



*Plectranthus cremnus*

### *Prostanthera rhombea* "Pink Form"

- actually a colour variant of an undescribed taxon.

By Robert Miller

In sheltered semi-shaded to shady aspects in cultivation, the plant known as *Prostanthera rhombea* "Pink Form", when growing well, is a small delicate shrub of dimensions normally less than 1 metre x 1 metre. Consequently it is popular with native plant enthusiasts, at least in the Sydney area where the species was first brought into cultivation.

This undescribed species was discovered by Burra Marsh on her former property, growing on a low fire trail embankment amongst the typical purple corolla plants of the species. Eight cuttings from this original plant were given to Betty Maloney and Alex Blomberry who raised the initial cuttings at Stoney Range Flora Reserve, Dee Why.

Since this time, the plant has been incorrectly perceived to be a pink flowering variant of *Prostanthera rhombea*. *Prostanthera rhombea* is a species that is characterised by having axillary flowers (the floral leaves are similar to or sometimes smaller than the stem ones) whereas *P. rhombea* "Pink Form" has flowers in terminal racemes (most of the floral leaves are gradually reduced to membranous deciduous bracts).

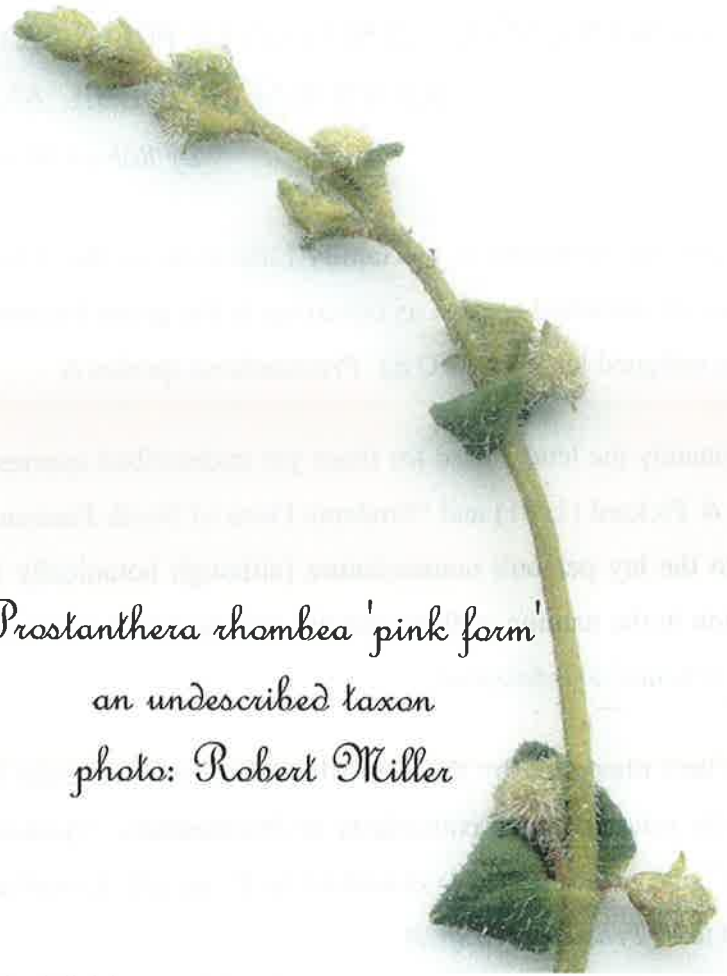


*Prostanthera rhombea*

Although *P. rhombea* sens. lat. has two distinct forms -

- the widespread "hairy leaf" form and
  - the rarer "glabrous leaf" form of the lower Blue Mountains
- both have axillary flowers.

These two forms also warrant closer study and will undoubtedly be separated and given some formal recognition.



*Prostanthera rhombea* 'pink form'  
 an undescribed taxon  
 photo: Robert Miller



*Prostanthera rhombea* 'glabrous form'  
 ex Erakine Creek  
 photo: Robert Miller

With rural subdivision occurring at an alarming rate in the area - mainly as weekender hobby farms, this species along with populations of *Prostanthera cineolifera* are under imminent threat from clearing, grazing and fire.

The species is only known from the original collection and as such requires priority listing under the

Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995.

Field work is also required to:

- rediscover the population
- determine the population size
- ascertain the species ecological requirements
- determine potential habitat sites
- locate further populations
- ascertain the species conservation rating

A REVIEW OF UNNAMED SPECIES OF PROSTANTHERA DESCRIBED IN FLORA OF NEW SOUTH WALES VOL. III. AND TELOPEA 7 (3)

By Robert Miller

As part of his treatment of the family Lamiaceae in the "Flora of New South Wales", Dr. Barry Conn listed seven as yet unnamed species as occurring in the genus *Prostanthera* within New South Wales. These unnamed taxa are assigned letters A to G eg. *Prostanthera* species A

Unfortunately the letters used for those yet undescribed species do not equate with other authors' treatments eg. Jacobs & Pickard (1981) and "Students Flora of North Eastern New South Wales Vol. V". Referral is also not given to the lay person's nomenclature (although botanically incorrect) of the species. This has added to the confusion in the naming of those species amongst enthusiasts and members of the public who do not have easy access to botanical references.

This is best illustrated by the confusion of names that exist for a commonly grown, unnamed species most frequently referred to by enthusiasts as *Prostanthera* "rylstonei". In George Althofers book "The Cradle of Incense" this same species is described as *P. sp. aff. howelliae*, in "Flora of New South Wales" the taxon is referred to as *Prostanthera sp. A*.



*Prostanthera*  
*monticola*

**This tabular presentation aims to collate references to unnamed species  
enabling cross-referencing to be more easily pursued.**

Current Nomenclature (Conn 1999)	Flora of New South Wales	Rare or Threatened Australian Plants Briggs & Leigh(1995)	Flora of North Eastern New South Wales	Cradle of Incense	Lay reference
P. species A	P. species A			P. sp. aff. howelliae	P. rylstonei
P. species B	P. species B	P. sp. 5 (Boonoo Boonoo; T. D Stanley 78/76)	2. Unnamed species		P. "Boonoo Boonoo"
P. species C	P. species C			P. sp aff. phyllicifolia	P. gilesii
P. hindii	P. species D	P. sp. 9 (Newnes Plateau; B.J. Conn 2647)		P. sp. aff. ovalifolia P. sp. nov. Kyber Pass	
P. species E	P. species E				
P. palustris	P. species F	P. sp. 7 (Bundjalung N.P.; B.J. Conn 3471)			P. sp. 'Bundjalung National Park'
P. askania	P. species G	P. sp. 6 (Strickland State Forest J. H. Maiden s.n.; 07/1915)	P. incisa var. pubescens	P. incisa var. pubescens	P. incisa var. pubescens
			18. Unnamed sp.		
			34. Unnamed sp.		
				P. sp. aff. denticulata	
				P. sp. aff. denticulata	
				P. sp. aff. granitica	
				P. sp. aff. incana	
P. lasianthos Rheophytic variant	P. lasianthos Rheophytic variant			P. sp. aff. lasianthos	
P. ovalifolia "Hawkesbury River" variant	P. ovalifolia	P. sp. 10 (Hawkesbury; B. J. Conn 2591)			
	P. rigens Group			P. sp. aff. leichhardtii	
				P. sp. aff. nivea	
				P. sp. aff. rotundifolia	
P. monticola	P. monticola			P. sp aff. walteri	
P. junonis		P. sp. 8 (Somersbey; B. J. Conn 2591)			P. 'mangrovei', Somersby Mint

## *Prostanthera* species A

The epithet of *Prostanthera rylestonii* has become the colloquial reference to this well known and commonly cultivated species amongst New South Wales members of SGAP and the nursery industry. The application of the name *Prostanthera rylestonii* is illegitimate and therefore avoidance of its use will ensure one's nomenclature is correct. The best known locality of the species is at Dunn's Swamp, (the old Kandos Works Dam) east of the township of Rylestone, Central Tablelands, NSW.

*Prostanthera* sp. A is an erect slender aromatic subshrub, 1.5 to 2.5m high. The branches have a dense tomentum of spreading hairs. The leaves are densely hairy, oblong to narrow-oblong, 7-12 mm long, 1.5-2 mm wide, with an obtuse apex. The margins of the leaves have often little lobes, or are bluntly toothed and are usually strongly recurved, especially in dry periods. The flowers are axillary, the corolla normally ranging from violet to mauve.

*Prostanthera* sp. A is confined to the Central Tablelands of NSW where it appears to be a naturally rare taxon. The

species, like most *Prostanthera* spp. is susceptible to the introduction of pathogenic fungi into its habitat. This poses a considerable potential threat due to the upgrading and promotion of recreational opportunities at Dunn's Swamp. *Prostanthera* sp. A should be listed as a Schedule 2 species on the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995.

The species, in the wild, grows in skeletal soil pockets amongst the many unique sandstone outcroppings of the region. Occasionally, it also occurs in deeper sandy loam soils supporting a *Eucalyptus rossii* - *Callitris endlicheri* forest.

This taxon is spectacular in flower, the common corolla variation ranges from violet to mauve. Two beautiful pink forms, however, are in cultivation; one discovered by the late Sid Cadwell and the other by myself. I have also observed a white flowering plant in 1984 growing at Dunn's Swamp.

In cultivation *Prostanthera* sp. A has proven to be an excellent container plant growing vigorously and flowering prolifically. It's success in the garden however is often varied, nevertheless its quick growth and floriferous qualities makes it an ideal fill-in species.



*Prostanthera* sp. A  
Pink form

in bud July 1999  
Photo: Robert Miller

## *Prostanthera* species B

This outstanding species gained favour with those SGAP members in the know, who first saw it cultivated at Burrendong Arboretum, Wellington, New South Wales.

The species is most commonly referred to by the name *Prostanthera* sp. 'Boonoo Boonoo' - in reference to one locality where it grows, namely Boonoo Boonoo Falls. It is also referred to as *Prostanthera* sp. unnamed in "Students Flora of North Eastern NSW, *Prostanthera prunelloides* by the Queensland Herbarium and included



*Prostanthera* species B in flower, July 1999  
photographer: Robert Miller

under *Prostanthera caerulea* in the "Flora of South Eastern Queensland". The occurrence of both *Prostanthera prunelloides* and *P. caerulea* in Qld are dubious.

grows amongst granite boulders whereas at Bald Rock, a granite monolith, it occurs near the summit and in gully-lines. It is recommended this species gain listing under the TSC Act 1995.



*Prostanthera* species B

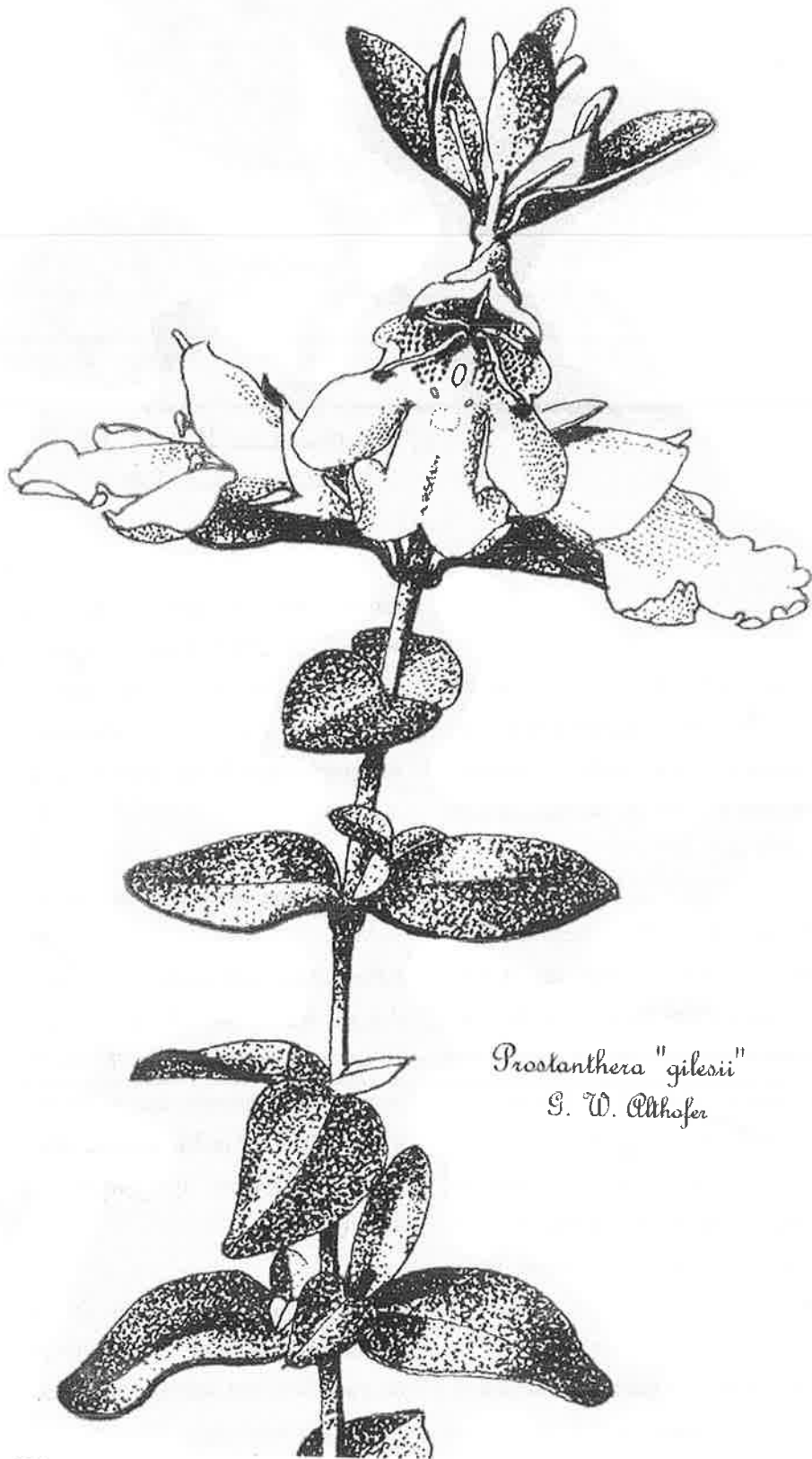
*Prostanthera* sp. B is a large aromatic shrub, 2 - 8 metres high, its branches are glabrous excepting for a covering of dense tomentum on and between the lateral ridges. Leaves are discolourous, ovate, 40-70 mm long, 12-26 mm wide, the apex is acute and margins entire. Flowers are abundant in a terminal botryoid, corolla white 10-20 mm long.

Distinguishing features of the species include flowers in terminal inflorescences and ovate entire leaves that are discolourous - dull olive green on top and much paler underneath. Its branches are glabrous, except for the lateral ridges and nodes, whereas other large leaf species are sparsely to densely hairy.

The species is apparently restricted to the Boonoo Boonoo - Bald Rock area near Tenterfield, New South Wales. At Boonoo Boonoo Falls the species

In cultivation *Prostanthera* sp. B is a spectacular shrub, somewhat touchy on its own roots, but easily grafted onto *Westringia fruticosa*.





*Prostanthera "gilesii"*  
S. W. Althofer

*Prostanthera species C* B. J. Conn

***Prostanthera species C***

*Prostanthera* sp. C is an erect or sometimes sprawling, non-aromatic shrub, 0.7-2m high. Its branches are normally +- terete, moderately to densely covered with short, antrose to slightly spreading hairs. Leaves are discolorous, mostly glabrous, ovate, 15-24 mm long, 6-10 mm wide; margins entire often slightly recurved, apex and base obtuse. Flowers are axillary, corolla 15-20 mm long, white to cream blotched with violet inside the corolla, occurring in spring.

This species was discovered in the 1940's by Bill Giles at Mount Canobolas near Orange. This species remains undescribed despite the efforts of the late George Althofer who suggested the name *Prostanthera "gilesii"* for the species and had indicated its uniqueness since its discovery.

The species appears to be related to *Prostanthera phyllicifolia* but differs to that species in leaf and flower attributes.



*Prostanthera phyllicifolia*

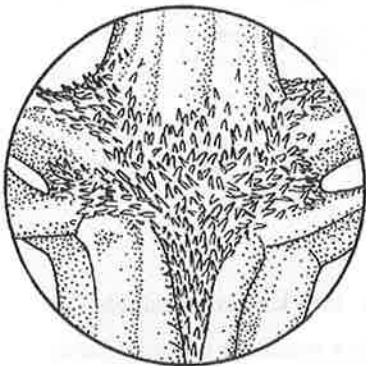
# *Prostanthera hindii*

B.J. Conn, sp. nov.



*Prostanthera hindii* has recently been described by Dr. B. J. Conn (Telopea Vol 7 (3)). The epithet acknowledges the contribution of Peter Hind, Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney to the understanding of the flora of Australia.

*Prostanthera hindii* was previously



*Prostanthera hindii* - internode referred to as *Prostanthera* sp. D in "Flora of NSW" and *Prostanthera* sp. 9 (Newnes Plateau) Briggs & Leigh (1996). In George Althofer's book the "Cradle of Incense" the species is referred to both as *Prostanthera* species aff. *ovalifolia* and *Prostanthera* sp. nov. 'Kyber Pass'.

*Prostanthera hindii* is an erect open sub-shrub, recorded to 2m but most frequently it grows between 1 - 1.5m in height. It is non aromatic or only faintly so, glabrous except for the branches that have a dense covering of short antrorse hairs between the lateral ridges and nodes. The leaves are entire, ovate to narrow ovate, dark green but often with a purplish tinge, the mid rib and margin are often maroon. The species is distinctive in bud and early flower as the large leaf-like bracteoles persist, enclosing the corolla and calyx until flowering.

George Althofer describes the flowers of *P. hindii* as large and usually violet, but also records the occurrence of shell pink forms and a bewildering range of intermediate colours. On the Newnes Plateau I have observed a pure white form struggling for existence on an extensive area of exposed bedrock. This colour form has been successfully grafted, resulting in a very rewarding addition to the garden.

This rare species is confined to the Central Tablelands from east of Rylestone to the Newnes Plateau. When encountered it is most commonly found growing in quartz-rich sandy, skeletal soils associated either with small eroded gully lines on the exposed sandstone outcropping or

on the edges of large expanses of exposed bedrock, often near cliffs.

*Prostanthera hindii* has proven difficult to grow in cultivation. I have had only limited success growing the species from cuttings, the species



*Prostanthera hindii* B. J. Conn, sp. nov.

quickly succumbing to poor drainage. Grafting this species onto *Prostanthera nivea* "Eugowra Form" is more successful but establishment can prove time consuming. The grafted plant initially requires continuous removal of suckering shoots from the rootstock and frequent pruning of the scion to establish a worthwhile plant. Once this is achieved however the species is ideally suited as a rockery plant being spectacular in flower.

## *Prostanthera* species E

*Prostanthera* sp. E superficially resembles *Prostanthera linearis* and until recently has been confused with it. This taxon is readily distinguished from *P. linearis*, it has strongly aromatic leaves that are often sticky and margins which are frequently finely toothed.

In mature plants (more noticeably so in the Wingello State Forest area) leaf margins are often entire and have a tendency towards being recurved and often revolute in dry periods. The species flowers from December to February.

In comparison, *Prostanthera linearis* has non to faintly aromatic leaves which are entire, flat and never sticky. Mostly it flowers from October to December, although a form from the



*Prostanthera* species E B. J. Conn

Photo: Robert Miller

Woronora River flowers sporadically throughout the year. *Prostanthera* sp. E flowers range in colour from mauve to light purple, rarely white, with fine purple dots in the throat and larger brown markings on the middle lobe of the lower portion of the corolla.

In the Wingello State Forest area *Prostanthera* sp. E grows on skeletal soil amongst low heath and scrub pockets on exposed sandstone bedrock adjacent to cliff-lines. In the Kangaroo Valley vicinity the species grows in

upper gully-lines in dry sclerophyll forest.

Based on the known localities *P.* species E is a restricted and vulnerable species which requires listing under the Threatened Species Conservation Act (TSC 1995).

*Prostanthera* sp. E is in very limited cultivation.



*Prostanthera palustris*

B. J. Conn sp. nov.

*Prostanthera palustris* has recently been described by Dr. B. J. Conn (Telopea Vol 7 (3)). The epithet is from the Latin *palustris*, swampy, referring to the habitat in which this species occurs.

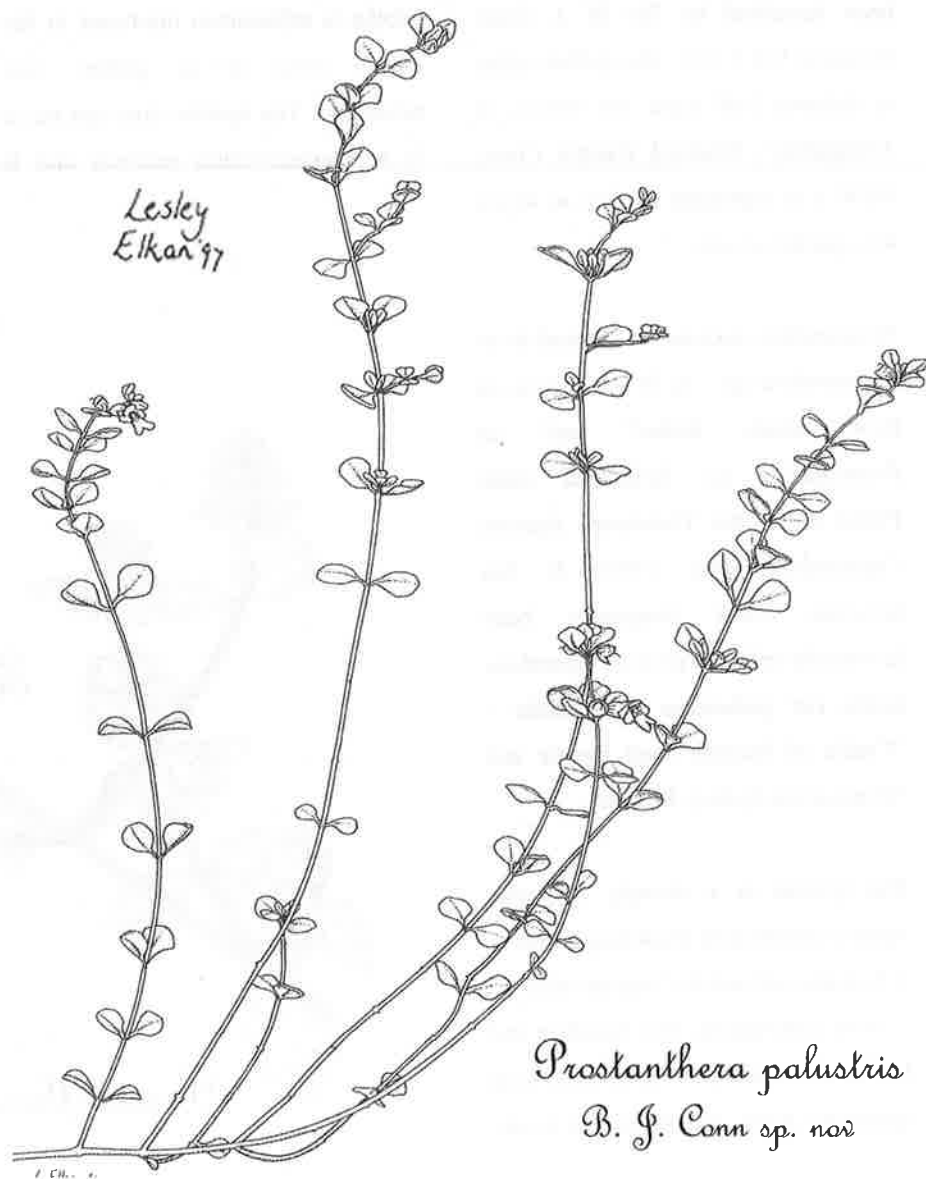
*Prostanthera palustris* has been previously referred to as *Prostanthera* sp. F in "Flora of NSW" and as *Prostanthera* sp. Bundjalung National Park under the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995.

*Prostanthera palustris* is a low, non aromatic, straggling shrub to 0.9m high, ascending only with support of the associated thick wet-heath vegetation. Its branches are glabrous except for a band of hairs between the lateral ridges. The leaves are obovate to +- spatulate, 5-9 mm long, 4-8 mm wide with a rounded apex and entire margin. The upper surface is mid green, the lower surface being paler. It is glabrous except for a few hairs on the petiole and mid-vein on the lower surface. Flowers are axillary, part inflorescence 1-flowered with the bracteoles non-persistent. The calyx is 4 to 4.5 mm long which enlarges slightly in fruit. The bluish flowers occur from May to June.

*Prostanthera palustris* grows in heath on white siliceous sand with a high organic content. Such areas are often subjected to extended periods of water-logging.

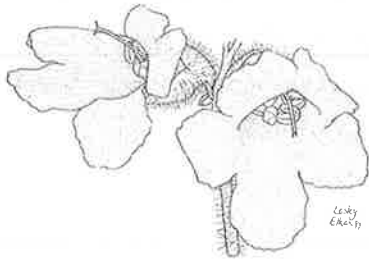
Although the species occurs in Bundjalung National Park, north coastal New South Wales it is very localised and is thought to be possibly endangered. It is currently listed as a Schedule 2 species TSC Act 1995.

The species is difficult to maintain in cultivation and would be best grafted. It can be successfully grown by cuttings but seems to do best when restricted to small container (over potting is lethal) in well drained, aerated, sandy mix which still retains adequate moisture.



*Prostanthera askania*

B. J. Conn, sp. nov.  
Tranquillity Mintbush



*Prostanthera askania* has recently been described by Dr. B. J. Conn (Telopea Vol 7 (3)). The epithet refers to Askania Park (now the 'Forest of Tranquillity', Gosford, Central Coast, NSW ) an important locality at which this species occurs.

*Prostanthera askania* is referred to as *Prostanthera* sp. G in the "Flora of New South Wales" and as *Prostanthera* sp. Strickland State Forest under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995. It has however, most frequently been incorrectly referred to as *Prostanthera incisa* var. *pubescens* eg. Althofer – "Cradle of Incense" and Beadle et al "Flora of the Sydney Region".

The species is a strongly aromatic, open to intertwined branching shrub 1-1.5 metres tall and 1-2 metres wide (at least in cultivation). The branches and leaves are densely covered with long spreading hairs. Its leaves are ovate,

12-25 mm long, 8-18 mm wide; dusty green in colour with an obtuse apex; the base is +- attenuate to truncate; margins deeply toothed and directed forward. Pale mauve to mauve flowers occur in spring and are presented in a terminal botryoid. Anthers have no appendages.

This endangered species is confined to the Gosford - Orimbah area where it is threatened by development, roadworks and weed invasion. It's preferred habitat is adjacent to rainforest in fire scorch zone or in gullies over sandstone. The species does not occur in any conservation reserves and is

thought to be endangered. Subsequently it is Listed as a Schedule 2 species under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995.

Although in cultivation for a number of years, it is surprising that this plant is grown by a few enthusiasts only. Whilst Curator, I successfully grew large entanglements of *Prostanthera askania* in sheltered aspects under a light Eucalyptus canopy at Sylvan Grove, Picnic Point. It thrived in sandy soil with supplementary watering. It has also proven to be a worthwhile and easy to grow potted plant.



*Prostanthera askania* B. J. Conn sp. nov.

*Prostanthera junonis*

B. J. Conn, sp. nov.

Somersby Mintbush



*Prostanthera junonis* was first collected in July, August and October 1926 by Blakely, Murphy & Sheiress, the specimens being lodged with the National Herbarium of New South Wales and thence referred to as *Prostanthera 'mangrovei'*. *P. 'mangrovei'* was presumed extinct, not being observed for 67 years, until its rediscovery by Robert Miller on 12 November 1993.

The taxon was formally described by Dr. B. J. Conn (Telopea Vol 7 (3)) as *Prostanthera junonis*. The epithet honours Mrs June Gay, formerly a member of SGAP East Hills who voluntarily assisted in curatorial support and databasing of the *Prostanthera* collection, National Herbarium of New South Wales. June passed away after a long illness on 30 September, 1997.

This species is referred to as *Prostanthera* sp. Somersby under the

New South Wales Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 and as *Prostanthera marifolia* (Mangrove Mtn. population) in the "Flora of New South Wales".

*Prostanthera junonis* is a low spreading, decumbent, weak sub-shrub, 0.1 to 0.3 m high, frequently stoloniferous. Its branches are sub-terete, sparsely to moderately hairy with appressed antrorse indumentum. The leaves are discolourous - dull green above paler beneath, grading from elliptic to narrow elliptic at the base of the plant (juvenile plants may only show this character) to almost linear on upper portions of mature specimens. Flowers are axillary forming a 4 - 14 flowered frondose racemiform conflorescence. The corolla is 8-12 mm long, pale mauve often fading with age to almost white.

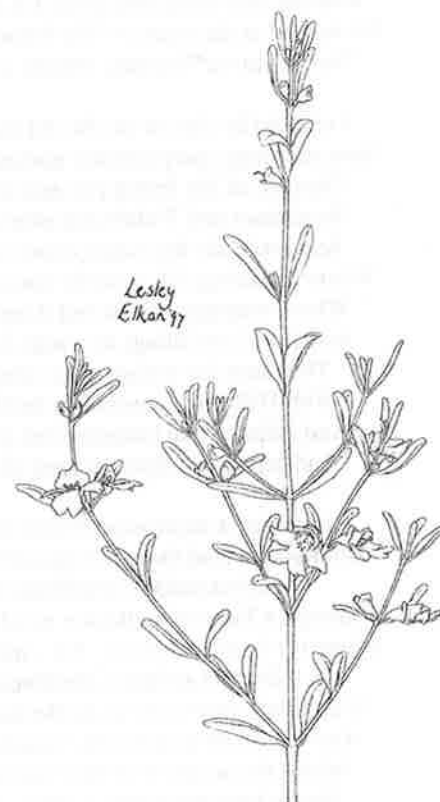
*Prostanthera junonis* is only known from the Somersby Plateau of the City of Gosford, Central Coast Region, New South Wales growing on white - grey sandy soils in heath / wet heath habitat which have been impacted upon in recent times for urban and industrial development.

This species is regarded as extremely rare, highly endangered and is not included in a conservation reserve. Without immediate protection from inappropriate urban and industrial development, this species is likely to

become extinct in the near future. Active management is required to ensure its survival.

The species is listed under Schedule 1 of the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 as *Prostanthera* sp. Somersby.

In cultivation Somersby Mintbush has proven difficult. The most successful technique is not to over pot, plants that remain in a potbound condition survive for the greatest length of time. In fact, most plants do not thrive until this condition is reached. Waterlogging is terminal. Alternatively, frequent re-propagation will retain the species in a collection. Grafting trials are required.



*Prostanthera junonis* B. J. Conn sp. nov.

# EPISODE WITH SHORTS, T-SHIRT AND SANDSHOES

BY  
COLIN GIBSON

## FROM HIS FORTHCOMING NEW BOOK OF BUSH POETRY *A WILD BLUE WANDER*

The sun, from its afternoon angle, beams  
On walls leaning over this stone strewn stream,  
Where I crouch by the creek, flushing sand from my socks,  
As it boisterously burrows its way through the rocks  
To pry ever on by innumerable races,  
Spraying itself over dark sandstone faces,  
To saturate shadows and smear them with slime  
And carve the solidified structure of time

I'd been shovelling and shouldering for most of the week –  
When I knocked off Friday I could hardly speak,  
My spine was on fire and burning my back  
So when I got home I went straight to my pack,  
And, though no great object of beauty to see,  
I said to it sweetly "your coming with me":  
So in went some rice and a packet of noodles  
With the rest of the rest of the kit and kaboodle  
All stowed in the boot of "The Mountain Express"  
Then on to the bitumen, wheels to the west...

I crashed by the car on the old plateau road:  
Next morning I purposefully packed up my load;  
Then out of the frying pan and into the fire,  
Sandshoes and T-shirt and shorts my attire  
As I made for the ridges crusty and coarse  
Where gathering rills give the canyon its source,  
Where seepages widen and deepen the rifts  
And Coral fern clings to cracks in the cliffs.  
Then into the scunge on a compass line  
With Dillwynia covered in devil's twine,  
And splinter-like branches that jab and rub  
And trip me up through dead stick scrub.

I crossed a succession of ironstone tops  
Following a lead through a bloodwood copse,  
As into a saddle I continued to toil  
Through a Turpentine thicket on chocolate soil  
Where the faintest dew-of-the-morning settles  
On Hibbertia saligna's deciduous petals;  
With bright little blooms on the native Oxalis  
And thorns on treacherous Smilax australis,  
Whilst the acrid oil of the rutaceous brush  
Broke from the leaves I gently crushed.

Then I spun down a spur heading into a hollow  
Sidling a pad that wallabies follow;  
I swatted the scrub till I came to a landing,  
A promontory with an aspect commanding  
A view of a void, grim and intense,

With bluffs strategically placed in defense:  
This furrow was sheer so I traversed around  
And by way of a moss covered log I got down,  
Some dextrous bridging, then back on the slope –  
The negotiable route required no rope  
As through a Prostanthera thicket I burst  
To be let down at the rivulet quenching my thirst.  
With one arm I swung my pack from my shoulder  
And sat in the filtered light on a boulder,  
Swallowing in, as dragon-flies played,  
The medicinal breath of a Sassafras glade.

But the creek beckoned onward, gushing and purling,  
Around and under log-jams swirling;  
Sucked through the knuckles of rapids and shutes,  
Chewing at the banks and exposing the roots –  
There were still-water sections of pebbles and sand,  
A compulsory swim and a hand-over-hand:  
But then of a sudden a change in direction  
Where the creek dropped away through a fissure-like  
section;

The roaring of water assaulted my ear,  
I readied myself and my abseiling gear  
And proceeded to reconnoiter ahead,  
Skirting a terrace with feelings of dread  
But there...at the end of a ledge ...I could see  
A convenient belay from a coachwood tree  
Anchored by roots to the end of a shelf;  
So into the darkness I lowered myself

I doubled the rope and clamped on a cleat-  
An overhang abseil of twenty-five feet.  
As soon as my toes touched gravelly ground,  
Release from my harness I pulled the rope down;  
Then onward I swept through a dimly light ally  
Passed walls like a tightening vice in the valley  
Where the narrowest slice of sky could be seen  
Above clusters of ferneries glowing with green.  
From dubious corners away I backed,  
On log-lanes I practised my balancing act;  
A series of swims, a couple of tumbles,  
A sequence of wades and bouldery jumbles,  
Circular sink-holes, abrupt little falls,  
Floodstones and chuckstones wedged between walls  
Sculptured and gouged by torrential forces  
And currents that flash along underground courses.

Tall cedar wattles stand on the opposite flank  
To my camp in a bracket of fern by the bank,  
Crayfish crawl through mulch in the pool  
While a gust through the gully, with fingertips cool,  
Teases the branchlets and tugs at the vines  
And frolics with fronds in these narrow confines.  
Tonight, as the moon rises up with her lamp,  
And parties of fire-flies dance through my camp,  
Wrapped up on a bedding of the leaf-litter there  
I'll curl by the fire and sleep like a prayer,  
And my soul, in a twilight terrain of its own,  
Will sink in the pool of my dreams like a stone.

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Line drawings of *Prostanthera* species C and *Prostanthera phylcifolia* have been modified from drawings contained within George Althofer's book *The Cradle of Incense*

The line drawing of *Prostanthera monticola* is modified from artwork by Mr. L. Dutkiewicz in Conn 1984 *A Taxonomic Revision of Prostanthera Labill. Section Klanderia (F.v. Muell.) Benth. (Labiatae)*, *J. Adelaide Bot. Gard.* 6(3): 207-348 (1984).

The cover illustration of *Plectranthus excelsus* was modified from W. A. Smiths artwork contained within taxonomic revision of the Queensland *Plectranthus* by P. J. Foster

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