

WELCOME

FROM  
Tim  
Langdon  
Manager

*Spring is here and we have some sensational offers and information for you. The theme for Spring 2006 is sustainability – finding the balance between the needs of business, the community and the environment. Those in government and business who want to tell others about their sustainability endeavours are welcome to apply for a listing on our new online directory. (More information is on the web site). Native Growth Holdings launches it's new look, dynamic, information-laden web site. This has been a huge task to piece together and we hope that it provides you with what you are looking for. We have a new web site launch 'Hot Offer' – this is not to be missed. Don't forget to download your free copy of our plant species list, extensive booklist and to check out the other special offers – there are some goodies for everyone. Pick up a copy of Josh Byrne's new book – The Green Gardener. The link between gardening and caring for the environment is made clear in this terrific new book. Our full colour, glossy Australian Native Plant Guide – a must have for native plant enthusiasts – is now available. It is full of brilliant images and is very informative. This guide takes the guesswork out of tree planting. Helen Kennedy, Vice President of the Australian Plants Society, provides readers with information about the society. As usual we highlight our extensive collection of seed packs and we have some very interesting articles from our regular contributors. If you would like to contribute to the seasonal Native News please email your contribution to [tim@nativenursery.com.au](mailto:tim@nativenursery.com.au) and we will assess its suitability. We don't just sell plants, we want to help you with all of your tree growing needs. We welcome any feedback and any ideas to improve our service. Native Growth Holdings.....delivering the environment to you.*

## Seed Packs

### KANGAROO PAW (Mixed Colours)

**Description** – Easy to grow. Attractive to nectar feeding birds. Numerous colour forms occur (red, orange, pink, yellow) from which these seeds have been collected. Perennial – stems to 2 metres.

**WHEN TO SOW** - In warm areas or in a glasshouse sow seeds at any time. In frost prone areas sow when danger of frost is over.

**WHERE TO GROW** – Full sun or part shade. Any well drained soil type. Garden or tubs.

**SOWING** – Fill pot or seed tray with moist sandy soil and compress. Sow seeds thinly on the surface and cover with soil to the thickness of the seeds. Add Wildflower Seed Starter liquid or granules to surface. Keep moist, not wet. Cover with clear polythene - remove when seeds germinate (2-3 weeks). Place in warm, shaded position. Protect from snails and slugs.

**CULTIVATION** - Pot on when seedlings are large enough to handle, place in a sheltered sunny position. Add rich leaf compost to garden soil and transplant to sunny garden position at 8cm high. Water in well, water regularly around the roots until established, weekly in dry weather. Avoid water logging. After flowering, prune if desired and apply a small amount of slow release low phosphate, nitrogenous fertilizer and iron sulphate..... Contents - Approx. 220 seeds



Mixed Colours Kangaroo Paw

# Ted's Tips

## Acacia

One of the best known Australian plants has to be the Acacia - more commonly known as the Wattle. There are over 800 species growing on our continent with many growing on adjacent islands. *Acacia pycnantha* (Golden Wattle) is our floral emblem, so it is great to add one to our gardens. Acacias come in many sizes from large trees to ground-covers. The foliage can be soft to quite prickly. The flowers come in many shades of yellow and there is also a reddish variety available. Acacias grow on all soil types from sand to heavy clay from our driest to wettest areas.

### Some interesting varieties worth growing are:

***Acacia denticulosa*** which comes from WA. It is a very upright plant that grows to about 2-3m. It has smooth greyish bark. Foliage is dark green, stiff and rough with veins in flat leaves. Flowers are bright yellow spikes which normally flower in Sept-Oct. It will stand pruning after flowering.

***Acacia stenophylla*** - River Cooba / Native Willow / Eumong. A very wide spread wattle quite common in Qld, Nth SA, NSW & Vic mainly along watercourses. Lovely small bushy tree grows between 5-10m. It has long strap-like pendulous leaves with pale yellow or cream ballflowers. Hardy long-lived tree that is great for wet sites. Makes an excellent specimen tree. It has dark



*Acacia glaucoptera*

very heavy timber that is lovely when polished.

***Acacia vestita*** - Hairy Wattle / Weeping Boree. As the name implies the leaves are covered with hairs. Comes from NSW. It has attractive soft blue green weeping foliage and grows to 2-4m tall. Very versatile wattle which has masses of bright yellow ballflowers which result in a great show around Aug-Sept. Can be pruned after flowering.

***Acacia gracilifolia*** - Graceful Wattle which comes from SA. Slender long fine leaves with slender arching branches with a very open appearance. Foliage is dark green and sticky. Masses of dense bright yellow ballflowers. Flowering Aug-Nov. This Acacia is drought and frost tolerant.

***Acacia glandiformis*** - Sword-leaf Wattle. Indigenous to NSW. Like many wattles this is drought and frost hardy and tolerates most soils. It grows to about 3m and is very bushy. The leaves are sword like (hence common name) and are quite stiff. One of the first to flower in the winter with large ballflowers.

***Acacia glaucoptera*** - Clay-bush Wattle. A native of WA. This is a very compact wattle which grows 1-2m. The very unusual flat like foliage has grey tones and new growth is purplish. Small yellow flowers appear along the stem in Spring. Can be grown from cutting or seed.

Wimmera  
Native  
NURSERY



## Ted's 10 Tips for Spring have a save water theme

1. Think about saving water in the garden – have you tried new methods? New innovative products are being released regularly.
2. Mulch with gravel, pea straw, lucerne hay or plant ground covers to reduce water evaporation.
3. Light pruning after flowering.
4. Always water direct to root system.
5. Good time to plant replacements.
6. If needed – fertilize.
7. Control weeds as these compete for precious moisture.
8. Control pests – aphids.
9. Good time to take cuttings.
10. Time to sow seeds.



*Acacia pycnantha*

# Spring Online Offers

## Offer 1

New web site launch –

### Hot Offer

Buy a Native CD and get  
a 4 Plant Pack **FREE**

(includes free delivery Australia-wide).

Conditions Apply



## Offer 2

### Special Offer

As a special offer  
purchase 8 x 140mm  
pots and receive **FREE**  
of cost the Australian Native Plants CD  
**normally priced at \$55.00** - Great  
Value!



## Offer 3

Purchase two books from the book  
shop and get **25% off** your third book  
purchase.

## Offer 4

Buy our new full colour Plant Guide and  
receive a **free seed pack**.

## Offer 5

Take out a listing in one of our paid  
online directories and receive a **\$50.00**  
**gift voucher** at The Native Shop.

## New Australian Native Plant Guide

*The Australian Native Plant Guide is an invaluable resource and companion for the Australian nature lover, farmer and gardener. It is designed to give the reader a deep appreciation of the beauty and usefulness of native Australian flora, and a clear understanding of exactly how to go about preparing, caring for and maintaining these plants to ensure maximum survival. Follow the easy steps and your plants will thrive.*

*This book is both an informative guide as well as a magnificent representation of the full beauty of the Australian landscape and environment that, given the opportunity, lies in every Australian garden, farm and beyond.*



RRP \$29.95

## Directories

The number one listed 'native' and 'native nursery' web site in Australia (source Google). This is much more than a directory. It is an information-laden portal for Australia's flora and environment. It is where people come to find out about native Australian plants and related information.

Native Growth Holdings' customer base is diverse and includes home and landscape gardeners, farmers, nurseries, government departments, landcare groups, catchment management authorities, water authorities,

wineries and mining companies. Clubs & Societies / Landcare Group listings are free

- Clubs & Societies
- Landcare
- Other Links

Native Growth Holdings seeks to promote businesses who have a similar interest in providing sustainable outcomes for their customers.

The more that we share ideas, the better we are placed to work for a more sustainable planet - where the pursuit of profit, the needs of the community and the needs of

the environment are in balance.

- Quality Nurseries
- Gardening
- Landscaping
- Water
- Land
- Energy
- Mining
- Environmental Suppliers & Consultants
- Government Departments
- Media & Publishing
- Education
- Travel & Accommodation

Edited extract from

# The Green Gardener

by Josh Byrne

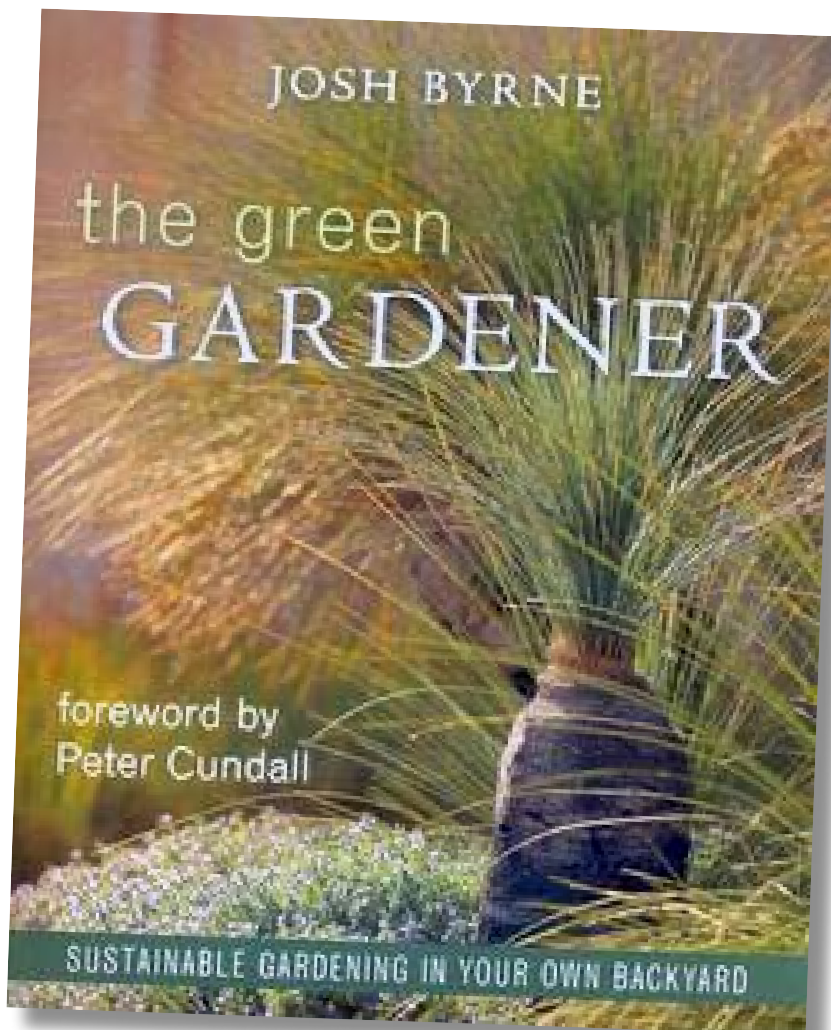
The link between gardening and caring for the environment is clear. We can reduce our energy consumption by keeping climate in mind when we design our gardens. We can create urban habitats for animals and birds by planting native species. We can save water by irrigating responsibly. Finally, we can reduce landfill by composting.

All of these 'green gardening' opportunities are literally right at our own back doors.

We can also use our gardens to grow healthy organic food that is both delicious and nutritious. Keeping a backyard veggie patch is seen as a hobby these days, but it is quite likely that backyard gardening will become a necessary skill once again, just as it was in our grandparents' time. When the oil that subsidises global food production and transport finally dries up, the cheap food imports that we currently enjoy will disappear. We can't expect to buy Chinese-grown garlic and Californian oranges for less than we can grow them here in Australia forever.

My passion for green gardening started from an early age, beginning with a four-square-metre 'no-dig' veggie patch on top of the lawn behind the family home. I was fascinated by how a few bales of straw, a load of compost and a handful of seeds could be converted into bundles of fresh vegetables within a matter of months. This childhood experiment triggered my love for gardening and, in particular, my interest in sustainable gardening. I have been replacing lawn with vegetables, fruit trees and native plants ever since.

The enthusiasm that was ignited by this small veggie patch led me to study environmental science, working on many garden projects in my home state of Western Australia and overseas along the way. It is now fifteen years since I laid down that first bale of straw and I am still studying, though now it's for a



PhD, and my research continues to be inspired by a commitment to sustainable gardening.

I established my first 'serious' garden as an eighteen-year-old while renting an old house with a bunch of student mates. We spent weekends and more than the occasional weekday creating a garden that provided us with food, friendship and fun. It also provided a home for frogs, fish and birds, which as it turned out made life easier for us. The frogs helped to control slugs and snails when the Khaki Campbell ducks were too full to move, the fish kept the mosquitoes in check, and the wattle birds picked the cabbage-moth grubs from our cauliflowers.

Green gardening is all about putting practical sustainability into action. If you're keen to save water, the answer is simple: choose hardy plants over thirsty ones, convert to drip irrigation and install a greywater system. If you want to help

provide for native wildlife, the solution is to grow Australian plants, build a native pond and set up a nesting box. If you're concerned about poisons in the environment and the effect that they're having on your family's health, go organic. And if you enjoy good food, grow some of your own — it is so easy to do and it tastes so much better.

By addressing any one of these areas you will be contributing to a cleaner and greener future. Encourage your friends to do the same and, who knows, in years to come we might find our parks full of organic food and our roadsides planted with native trees that link to our nature reserves. What is certain is that we can all start creating a greener planet in our backyards, right now.

*Edited extract from **The Green Gardener** by Josh Byrne, rrp \$29.95, published by Penguin/Viking.*

## Insights From Dr. Peter Yau Chartered Biologist

Officially we are now still in a prolonged drought period. Rainfall has been below long term average figures. I have received more than usual complaints from clients about building foundation failure due to tree root induced soil subsidence. This took my memories back to the 1980s when after the drought of 1982-83 a previously unheard-of phenomenon of building foundation subsidence failure became a widespread problem for many home-owners in the inner Melbourne areas. It was claimed by some engineers that tree roots were the cause of such damage. This allegation led the Melbourne City Council to commission a research project to be undertaken by the Department of Forest Science of The University of Melbourne because of the implications and ramifications of this allegation. The person doing this research project was a senior research fellow Dr RK Misra, assisted by myself and supervised by Professor Roger Sands. This research later was followed up by Mark Stewart for his MSc thesis.

Old houses built on shallow footings near large trees in areas with a reactive clay soil were more prone to this kind of foundation failure, it was found. The three key conditions must exist simultaneously for such damage to occur:

- Unsound building footing
- Reactive clay soil
- Prolonged dry soil conditions

The damage to a building in reactive clay soil is due to the differential volume change in the foundation soil which is associated with non-uniform change in soil water content. Swelling and shrinking occur in all clay soils on a regular seasonal basis, with or without any trees. Modern buildings are designed and constructed to withstand such seasonal heave or settlement, whereas older buildings with

substandard shallow foundations are more sensitive to differential ground movement than buildings with deeper stronger foundations.

Not all soil types are reactive to soil water changes. Reactive clays that swell when wet and shrink when dry are the most vulnerable. Sand on the other hand does not have such properties. Therefore houses built on sandy soils generally are not affected in this way.

The clay soil must be desiccated below a critical threshold level before shrinkage occurs – therefore a brief dry spell is unlikely to have the same damaging effect as a prolonged drought. What causes soil desiccation is the sum-difference between rainfall and evaporation-transpiration (known as evapotranspiration). Evaporation is a natural climatic factor, whereas transpiration is due to the water demand of vegetation.

Not all vegetation have the same water demand – some tree species absorb more soil water than others, and at any one time only a fraction of tree roots are active in extracting water from soil, depending on a variety of external factors. Some trees wilt and defoliate when the soil is dry and they close down physiologically until the soil re-wets, whereas other so-called drought-tolerant species continue water uptake from already dried soil.

Tree roots also can absorb water from

a distance without being physically present! The analogy is to drink with a long straw. So you do not need to dig and find roots near the damage to implicate trees. We must be very careful when making allegations against trees causing soil shrinkage and foundation failure. Nobody can be 100% certain that trees are the sole cause of the damage. We can only calculate on balance of probability whether a tree in the vicinity of damage is considered to be high risk or low risk – thanks to a complex formula developed by the Arboricultural Association in the UK.

On this same subject, I want to discuss the issue of tree root barriers. Many engineers now design foundations incorporating a deep root barrier to stop tree root entry. Some root barriers are 2m to 2.5m in depth, often at a depth where no tree roots venture to grow into. Most root barriers are installed very close to the 'offending' tree, and the trench excavation necessary for root barrier construction almost always leads to massive root cutting and severe root damage/loss. No prize for guessing correctly what happens next – the tree falls down shortly after!

This is a complex subject and there are no simple yes/no answers. If in doubt, do not simply offer the final solution to remove the trees, or else the city will be without trees in the streets and home-gardens.



(Typical building foundation damage due to differential soil movement)

# Tony's Tips

## Callistemon

**Commonly known as Bottlebrush this species is widely available from nurseries throughout Australia and there are a huge number of varieties in the range. Many of the varieties are hybrids and selected forms and vary from small to medium shrubs to medium trees.**

Mildura, in northern Victoria, has abundant plantings of Callistemon in residential streets, parks and home gardens and they are truly spectacular in Spring when in flower. In particular the Gawler hybrid 'Harkness' is sensational. It is a tree with large red brushes hanging from the foliage as they appear from the ends of the branches. In my opinion this is almost the perfect tree. It grows to about 6-8m high and nearly as wide. It has dense foliage and when trimmed above head height it offers excellent shade. It tolerates most conditions, does not retain seeds or nuts on the branches and like all Callistemons it can be trimmed/pruned to suit your needs.

There are many other varieties to choose, including trees or shrubs that are fine, broad leaf or weeping foliage and there is terrific colour variation available. Flower colours range from white, cream, yellow, shades of red, pink, mauve/purple and even green.

It is possible to have a continuous flowering for months by planting several varieties in an area. For example, C. 'Harkness', C. 'King's Park



Callistemon 'Harkness'

Special', C. citrinus, C. 'Endeavour' and C. phoeniceus. These will flower in succession and attract a range of native birds.

### Other options for using Callistemon species include:

**C. 'Little John'** – an excellent small variety that can be pruned into a low hedge. It flowers several times a year from spring to autumn.

**C. viminalis** – various forms that have a weeping habit can be used on property driveways and boundaries to form a grand entrance or screen.

**C. citrinus** – there are various forms but is generally a large shrub and can be used as a hedge.

Mildura  
Native  
NURSERY



**C. macropunctatus** – offers a very attractive habit and may be incorporated into a windbreak or greenbelt and it is very hardy.

Callistemon are a native plant that can offer so many benefits for your property.

Please note: Callistemon have a vigorous root system so do not plant them near water pipes that are penetrable such as realm drains or septic systems.

Please check the [www.nativenursery.com.au](http://www.nativenursery.com.au) web site or our new Australian Native Plant Guide for variety options and plants details or contact the nursery staff and we will be delighted to answer your questions.



Callistemon citrinus

## The Australian Plants Society By Helen Kennedy APS Vice President

The Australian Plants Society was founded in 1957, in an overwhelming response to a meeting called in Melbourne by Arthur Swaby, to find out if there were others like him who were interested in growing Australian plants in their home gardens. The organisation was called The Society for Growing Australian Plants (some years ago the name was revised to become more simply, The Australian Plants Society.)

The Society now has branches all over Victoria and indeed, all over Australia. The membership is made up of people who grow native plants in their gardens, who propagate them from cuttings and seed, who are keen to promote the beauty and variety of this country's unique flora in the wider community. Many members are actively involved in local community gardens and bush regeneration programmes. Conservation and preservation of the natural environments in which native plants grow is a major interest for many.

APS activities are focused in local District Groups, which operate all over the State, under the APS Vic. umbrella. Monthly meetings of each group usually have a speaker on a topic of interest. There is always a specimen table of spectacular flowers from members' gardens – and shared discussion of experiences of growing these plants. Regular garden visits or bush walks are peppered throughout the year, providing an opportunity to view plants of interest in the local area. There is always someone who can help you – or someone you can help – and knowledge is shared willingly. Each District Group produces a regular newsletter and the Victorian magazine, "Growing Australian," is a great source of information and ideas.

In Victoria, there are four meetings (Quarterly Meetings) held each year; country and urban District Groups take turn to host these. The Committee of Management meets on Saturday morning (delegates come from each District Group) to decide on matters of policy that affect everyone. The rest of the weekend is given over to garden visits, excursions to areas of local interest and nursery visits, the highlight being a Saturday night dinner and speaker. Every second year, a Seminar is held which concentrates on one genus – Banksias, Boronias, Acacias etc. Expert speakers are drawn from all over Australia – as are the participants! These seminars, held to honour Fred Rogers, a pioneer in Australian plants, offer an unrivalled opportunity to learn about a specific genus of interest.

Also biennial are the ASGAP Conferences, held in a different State each time, and featuring the flora and scenic wonders of that state. The Conference itself runs for a week, with a huge range of learned and interesting speakers and in addition there are pre and post conference tours, which take participants on some fascinating journeys of discovery. These conferences are deservedly hugely popular; they are eagerly anticipated and booked out quickly. In addition to all the knowledge you gain, a great added bonus to all the events mentioned above is that you meet some wonderful and interesting people and after a short while, have new friends not only around the State, but all over the country.

Study Groups, which operate on a national basis, enable members to participate in gathering information on particular groups of plants that interest them. Currently there are at least 30 Study Groups, specialising in grevilleas, eremophilas, banksias, epacris, hakeas – the list goes on! Each Study Group publishes a newsletter, which keeps members up to date on new hybrids, grafting techniques, potting mixes, etc. Under the Study Group umbrella are special interest groups such as Australian Plants for Bonsai and Containers, Food Plants and Garden Design. Several Study Groups have produced significant, ground-breaking books. In several cases, APS Vic. has assisted in the publication of those books.

Membership of APS Vic. entitles members to a great range of benefits, including 4 issues of "Growing Australian" per year, membership of District and Study Groups, 6 packets of free seeds (your choice from a comprehensive list) four times a year, books on Australian Plants and associated interest areas at discount prices. There are plant sales at least twice a year. And, of course, you have the sharing of knowledge and friendship with some terrific people!

Membership details can be obtained from the Membership Secretary : Alison Potter, 218 Gap Rd, Riddells Creek, 3431.

Helen Kennedy  
APS Vice President.



Hakea laurina

# The amazing Water Tube

Drought-proof  
your garden

**The unique  
answer to:**

- Save water
- Save plants
- Save time
- Save costs



**WATERTUBE**