

The UCSC/ Koala Blooms Introduction Program and Suncrest Nurseries, Inc.



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One of our great local treasures in Santa Cruz County is--and has been for many years--the Arboretum at the University of California, Santa Cruz. I had the pleasure in the 1970s of watching its fledgling collection of Australian plants grow from an odd menagerie under foil-covered bottles to a beautiful public garden. Within a few years it became the most extensive collection of Australian native plants outside Australia itself. The process involved tireless work by the Director, Ray Collett and an enthusiastic, at that point mostly student staff, plus generous cooperation by Rodger Elliot, one of the great plant collectors and distributors of Australia. One of the side benefits of this arrangement was that many of the acquisitions were not merely random representatives of their species, but outstanding horticultural selections.

Dr. Collett was notably generous with local nurseryfolk interested in giving these plants a try, and the Arboretum became--as it remains to this day--one of the great sources for new ornamental plant material in California. There was only one thing missing from this picture: Income for the garden to pursue its work in new plant research and introductions. Individual nurseries and the Monterey Bay Chapter of the California Association of Nurseries and Garden Centers have offered significant support. But as the sheer size of the Arboretum and its projects grew, with only modest increases in funding by the University, the quest for funding became an urgent matter. One small piece of the solution was conceived jointly by Rodger Elliot and others at Koala Blooms in Australia and the staff at the Arboretum: A new introduction scheme under which some of the most promising acquisitions from Australia are offered to cooperating nurseries for propagation, and a substantial royalty is paid on each plant sold. Just how much this scheme can contribute to the Arboretum's budget remains to be seen, though it has grown steadily for several years. However, each of us, from grower to ultimate consumer, will have the double pleasure of acquiring the latest and best of Australian plant selections and of supporting the work of the Arboretum in their development.

We at Suncrest are pleased to be part of a small group of grower nurseries cooperating to bring this plan to fruition. As the list continues to grow, each of these nurseries has chosen the plants that have performed best in its particular environment and sales area. The following are in current production at Suncrest. Most are easily grown, rewarding just a little effort by the gardener with beautiful forms, foliage and flowers. Most prefer sun or light shade along the coast, part shade inland, reasonably well-drained, non-alkaline soil and moderate watering. The exceptions are noted below. Their hardiness varies as shown.

***Banksia spinulosa* ‘Schnapper Point’**

‘Schnapper Point’ is a dense, spreading shrub which reaches 2-4 feet in height, and up to 5 feet (perhaps more) in width, after several years. Narrow leaves with downrolled margins are closely set in a brush around the stems. The leaves are bright to deep green above, paler beneath, and 1-2½" long. Dense clusters of red and honey-colored flowers stand upright from the mature stems in fall and winter. This is a bright, clean-looking foliage shrub at all times of the year, useful alone or in shrubby borders and open banks. It delights in a sunny spot, with reasonably well-drained soil (no supplemental fertilizer should be needed) and moderate to occasional, deep watering. It is hardy to around 20°F. when established.

***Boronia clavata* ‘Heather Wand’**

The boronias are a group of showy but sometimes temperamental shrubs, valued for delicate textures and the fragrance of flowers and foliage. ‘Heather Wand’ is clearly one of the easiest of the group to grow, although it is a plant of quieter beauty than the two selections that follow. It grows about 5 feet high,

with a dense upright-oval form. Its bright green, heath-like leaves are closely set along the stems. Small, pendant light green bells are carried along the stems through the spring months and sometimes into early summer. This is a subtle shrub, combining well in mixed plantings and shrubby borders. It thrives in sun or light shade along the coast, part shade inland, in reasonably well-drained soils and with moderate watering. It has already proven hardy to 20°F. or less.

***Boronia crenulata* 'Rosy Splendor'**

You may already be familiar with *Boronia crenulata* by way of the cultivar 'Shark's Bay', which we also offer. It is a low, compact shrub with small, nearly wedge-shaped, aromatic leaves and little bright pink stars carried much of the year. 'Rosy Splendor' is equally compact but distinctly upright in growth, reaching about 4 feet in height. The leaves are narrower, about ½" long and of a darker green, with bronze tones in winter. Though its flowering season is more restricted than that of 'Shark's Bay' (mostly late winter and spring), it bears masses of rose pink flowers which nearly hide the foliage. It thrives in full sun along the coast, sun or part shade inland. This shrub should have particularly well-drained, non-alkaline soil and moderate watering. Hardy to around 20°F.

***Boronia megastigma* 'Jack Maguire's Red'**

Like the other forms of brown boronia we offer, 'Jack Maguire's Red' is a very bushy, nearly round shrub, growing about 3 feet tall. It has intricately branched, slender stems and bright green, heath-like leaves. All that said, its most striking feature is a profusion of small deep red, bell-shaped flowers with bright chartreuse inner surfaces, borne in small clusters at every node along the younger stems in late winter and early spring. Their appearance would be reason enough to grow the plant, but they also emit a wonderful sweet fragrance that floats for great distances on the slightest breeze. Like several other boronias, this one is best near the coast, in sun or light shade, and will require some shading in order to moderate summer temperatures inland. Well-drained, non-alkaline soil and moderate watering are also important. Hardy to 20-25°F.

***Brachysema praemorsum* 'Bronze Butterfly'**

This is among the oddest of Australia's many pea-shrubs. It lies nearly flat, with slender branches forming a circle of 3-4 feet diameter. Wedge-shaped, toothed leaves are paired along the stems, giving the effect of little butterflies, or perhaps bow ties. Their color is bronze- to purplish green overall, with narrow light green margins. Dull red beak-shaped blossoms nestle among the branches--most heavily in spring, with a scattering at other times. This is an interesting novelty shrub, especially attractive on raised mounds and banks. Hardy to 20-25°F.

***Callistemon* 'Cane's Hybrid'**

'Cane's Hybrid' provides welcome relief from the widely used, sometimes overly bold *C. citrinus*. It grows naturally as a shrub, up to 10 feet high and 8 feet wide, but is easily trained as a small parasol-shaped tree. It has slender, slightly drooping stems lined by narrow leaves, each 2-3" long. The leaves are grey-green when mature, bronze- to rose-tinted in new growth. In late spring and early summer the plant is decorated by soft pink "brushes" of flowers near the stem ends. 'Cane's Hybrid' is amenable to the same uses and abuses as most of the other callistemons from simple shaping to hedging. It is a sun-loving shrub, adaptable to many soils with moderate watering, and drought tolerant when established. Hardy to 20°F or less.

***Chorizema* 'Bush Flame'**

We have grown a nice form of the common flame pea, *Chorizema cordatum*, since Wintergreen days. 'Bush Flame' is reputed to be a hybrid between this species and *C. varium*. It is a spreading shrub with

slender stems, growing to perhaps 3 feet high by 4-5 feet broad. The stems are closely lined by toothed, perfectly heart-shaped, deep green leaves. The leaves also have an attractive satiny surface. In winter and early spring, sprays of incredible orange and pink pea flowers issue from the leaf-axils along the mature shoots.

This shrub is a fine choice for brightening shady nooks and may be used in mixed plantings and shrubby borders. It grows best in light shade except along the coast. Hardy to around 20°F. when established.

Chrysocephalum 'Silver and Gold'

This is one of several shrubby daisies most of us once knew under the genus *Helichrysum*. It is a profusely branched, trailing shrublet, forming a broad mat in time. Thickly cloaking the slender stems are soft, silvery narrow-oval leaves. Small golden yellow strawflowers are clustered at the branch tips in spring and summer (or nearly throughout the year near the coast). It thrives in sun or part shade, with non-alkaline, well-drained soil and moderate watering. Hardy to 20-25°F.

Correa alba var. pannosa 'Western Pink Star'

With more dramatic correas competing for attention, 'Western Pink Star' is probably not destined for stardom. However, it is a pleasant, useful and durable shrub. It is nearly prostrate in habit, mounding to 2 feet high and 3-6 feet wide. Roundish, furry grey-green leaves thickly cover the stems. Upfacing soft pink flowers nestle among the leaves in spring and summer. It seems more adaptable to a variety of soils than other correas (though well-drained, non-alkaline soil is still best). Give it moderate to occasional irrigation. It is hardy to 20°F. or less.

Correa baeuerlenii 'Lemon Cap'

'Lemon Cap' is a dense, dark shrub, growing up to 6 feet high, upright-oval when young and spreading somewhat with age. It has deep green pointed-oval leaves, up to 2½" long, with a lacquered surface and pleasant fragrance. Nearly cylindrical, pendant 1½" flowers with a distinctive "chef's cap" base are presented along the stems from November to March. Their color is a blend of lemon yellow and chartreuse. It is generally easy to grow, though well-drained soil is a "must". Hardy to 20-25°F.

Correa pulchella 'Pink Eyre'

This is my personal favorite among the correas. It is a dense, spreading shrub, growing up to 3 feet high and about 5 feet wide. It has thick, attractively grey-green foliage. In late winter and spring it bears a profusion of clustered, dainty rose-pink bells. Like 'Pink Flamingo', it tolerates some drought if shaded. It has already endured bouts of temperatures below 20°F. at the nursery with minimal to no damage.

Correa pulchella 'Pink Flamingo'

This is a rounded shrub of compact growth, with rather shiny, dark green leaves, paler on their lower surface. The plant is wonderfully floriferous, carrying many bright salmon pink bells, each about ¾" long, from November to March. Given a little shade, it is moderately drought tolerant. This makes it particularly attractive for planting under oaks. Its hardiness is conservatively rated at "mid 20s", though I suspect that it will survive bouts of 20°F. or less.

Correa 'Ray's Tangerine'

This is a hybrid made by Dr. Ray Collett, who co-founded the Arboretum and directed its operations for many years. It is a compact spreading shrub reminiscent of the old *C. neglecta* (now treated as a form of *C. pulchella*). It has closely paired, bright green, shiny ½-1" leaves. Beginning in October or November, it is decorated by clusters of reddish orange bells, each up to 1½" long. The show lasts into late winter or early spring. Hardy to around 20°F.

***Correa reflexa* 'Cape Carpet'**

As the cultivar name suggests, this is a dense, spreading shrub, ultimately up to 1-2 feet high and as much as 10 feet broad. It has brown-hairy stems, closely set with dark, fuzzy green, deeply veined leaves. Cheery red 1" bells with flared bright green tips hang along the stems from fall to middle or late spring. It is particularly attractive to hummingbirds. One of the least fussy of the correas, it has already proven hardy to 20°F. or less.

***Correa reflexa* 'Carpenter Rocks'**

This is a bushy, nearly round shrub, growing 3-4 feet high, and intricately branched. Paired along the stems are narrowly heart-shaped ½-1" leaves. These are dark green and shiny above, paler beneath. Nodding beneath them from fall to spring are bright red 1" bells with chartreuse tips. Like other correas, it has many uses whether displayed alone, in groups or in shrubby borders. It is easily grown and hardy to 20-25°F.

***Diplolaena angustifolia* 'Orange Urchin'**

This is a striking though (unfortunately) difficult shrub, with several distinctive features. It grows erect to about 4 feet. Narrow 2" leaves, grey-green above and paler beneath, are clustered at intervals along the stems. Dense, nodding clusters of spidery orange flowers, surrounded by pale bracts to form broad bells, are presented along the stems in late winter and spring. It requires excellent soil drainage and is best in a relatively cool site, lightly shaded, with moderate to occasional water. It is hardy to about 25°F.

***Grevillea lanigera* 'Coastal Gem'**

This is a ground-hugging shrub, 1 foot high or less in youth and later mounding to around 2 feet, with a spread of 5 feet or possibly more. The limber stems are crowded with furry grey-green leaves, narrow in outline and 1/4-1/2" in length. Clusters of pinkish buds crowd the stems by early fall, gradually darkening and expanding into deep rose-pink and cream-colored flowers. The show may last until March or April. This is a fine low-maintenance ground cover, thriving in full sun or light shade in most non-alkaline soils, with moderate to occasional, deep watering. It is hardy to 20°F. or less.

***Nematolepis frondosa* 'Elizabeth'**

An erect, bushy shrub eventually growing 6 feet or more tall. It is well dressed with nearly round half-inch, deep green leaves, giving off a pleasant fragrance when brushed. Small starry white flowers, also fragrant, decorate the plant in late winter and spring. The plant is tolerant of clipping and is easily shaped, even formed into hedges. It demands excellent soil drainage and resents high heat, making it best for a shaded site. Hardy to about 20°F.

***Phebalium squamulosum* 'Cinnamon & Gold'**

A spreading 2-4 foot shrub with cinnamon-hairy leaves and stems. Abundant small, bright yellow flowers nestle among the foliage in early spring. Prune it after flowering to keep it compact. It is easily grown and at least moderately drought tolerant when established. Hardy to 20°F or less.

***Philotheca myoporoides* 'Galaxy'**

A rounded, evergreen shrub to 3-4 feet tall and wide, with aromatic, narrow, deep green leaves, bronze-tinted in new growth. Clusters of pink buds develop all along the younger stems in fall and winter, opening into masses of starry white flowers. This spectacle lasts well into spring. It is less fussy about soil than many "Aussies", though excessive lime should be avoided. Moderately drought tolerant and hardy to around 20°F.

***Philotheca verrucosa* 'Starbright'**

Like *Correa* 'Western Pink Star', above, 'Starbright' is a plant of quieter beauty than most of the Koala group. It is dense and spreading in habit, growing perhaps 3-4 feet high and 6 feet or more wide in time. The stems are closely lined by small dark green, broad-oval leaves with wavy margins. In spring mature plants produce masses of small, long-lasting, starry pink flowers all along the stems. 'Starbright' is easily grown in a variety of soils, with moderate watering, and it tolerates some drought when established. Hardy to around 15°F.

***Prostanthera* 'Poorinda Bride'**

A robust shrub, officially described as up to 4-6 feet tall and wide but probably more in a well-tended garden. It is a little more open than some prostantheras but easily pruned, even sheared for a more compact presentation. It has narrow, dark green 1" leaves reminiscent of the rosemaries. Large white flowers flushed lavender decorate the plant through the spring months. It is notably easier to grow than most prostantheras, tolerating a wider range of soils and watering regimes. Hardy to around 20°F., possibly less.

***Rhodanthe anthemoides* 'Paper Star'**

This is a most interesting perennial, forming low, dense mats crowded with narrow grey-green leaves. The plants are attractive year-round with occasional shearing. In spring and summer clusters of small, dark pink buds open into pure white "strawflowers", each of which lasts for several weeks. A good candidate for the rock garden, perennial border, and hanging pots. Hardy to 25°F. or less.

***Tetratheca ericifolia* 'Heathland Gem'**

A heath-like shrublet with slender, more or less erect stems. It grows up to two feet tall, with at least equal breadth. The stems are closely packed with small narrow leaves, dark green overall but tinged with red in cooler weather. Abundant broadly bell-shaped mauve-pink flowers decorate the plants in spring and early summer. A nice addition to mixed borders and larger rock gardens, it grows best in light shade except along the coast, with well-drained soil and moderate watering. Hardy to around 20°F.

***Tremandra stelligera* 'Karri Violet'**

An odd but pretty perennial, under 1 foot high but spreading to 3 feet or more. It has nearly triangular 3/4" purple-tinged leaves. Beginning in late winter and continuing through spring, many vivid purple flowers nestle among the leaves. A good plant for rock gardens and decorative containers, with well-drained soil. Hardy to 25°F. or less.

***Verticordia plumosa* 'Pink Lace'**

The verticordias are small, often very showy but frequently temperamental shrubs of the myrtle family. This one is distinctly easier to grow than most and quite pretty. It is usually 2 feet or less in height, dense and intricately branched, with blue-green heath-like leaves. Masses of small lavender pink flowers open at the shoot tips in late winter and spring. Each is beautifully fringed around the margins of the petals, inviting close inspection. It delights in a sunny location with well-drained soil, and tolerates some drought. Hardy to 20-25°F.