

# PROTEACEAE 101

## **October/November 2006 Issue**

Welcome to 'PEP', our "*Protea Education Program*". Our ultimate goal is to educate and inform about the benefits of ***Protea...flowers beyond the ordinary***. Your questions, comments and suggestions are always appreciated.

Remember to add this e-mail address to your address book to ensure you receive our newsletter promptly. If you have trouble viewing this email, please click here:

[http://www.DiscoverProtea.com/11\\_Nov\\_Newsletter.htm](http://www.DiscoverProtea.com/11_Nov_Newsletter.htm).

If you missed any previous issues of "***Proteaceae 101***" please visit this page:

[http://www.DiscoverProtea.com/new\\_media.htm](http://www.DiscoverProtea.com/new_media.htm).

Please enjoy and have a great month.

## **Important things you want to know about this month**

Flower-worthy dates in October/November

### October

29<sup>th</sup> – Daylight Saving Time Ends (set clocks back one hour)

31<sup>st</sup> – Halloween

### November

7<sup>th</sup> – Election Day

11<sup>th</sup> – Veterans Day

23<sup>rd</sup> – Thanksgiving

### October Birthstone

Pink Tourmaline/Sapphire (pink)

### November Birthstone

Citrine (yellow)

### October Flower of the Month

Cosmos

### November Flower of the Month

Chrysanthemum

## **Protea Graphics**

Check our Website occasionally; we will be adding a page dedicated to photographs and art of these magnificent flowers. With their exotic shapes, colors and textures, these flowers make spectacular subjects for photographers, artists and graphic designers. Personally, I fall into two of those categories and, that was my initial attraction to Protea. Visit our Website at <http://www.DiscoverProtea.com>

## **This month's topic...more information about these fascinating flowers**

The Proteaceae family is found in a vast variety of vegetations, from savannas and grassland to heavily overgrown hillsides. They thrive in areas that are prone to periodic wild fires – like Southern California, Australia and South Africa. Many of the Proteaceae have evolved specialized survival techniques in response to these fires. Their strong root systems and thick bark on some varieties, have given these extraordinary plants the ability survive the heat and smoke generated by fires. In fact, fire and smoke provide the major trigger in the wild for the Proteaceae seeds to start the germination process. Seed can lie dormant for years waiting for the right conditions, usually brought on by veldt fires. For these fire-sensitive species, habitat burning is the single most important cue for triggering germination of the dormant seed.

This does not mean that you have to set back yard on fire to successfully grow Protea in your garden. You probably won't be collecting seed and starting new plants that way in any case. Luckily, there are nurseries that specialize in Protea and some wonderful online recourses.

For Protea care, arrangement and gift tips, visit the Web site at <http://www.DiscoverProtea.com>. The Web site donates 10% of bouquet profits to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International.

Our Protea 'California Fall Bouquets' are now available at <http://www.DiscoverProtea.com>

### **Protea of the month...*Protea repens* 'Sugarbush'**

*Protea repens* is a small evergreen shrub which may grow to about 12 ft tall but is best kept at 6 to 10 ft in the garden. The individual flowers vary in color from pure white to rose pink to deep pink. In California, they commonly grow a form which is rose-pink, flowering from August to December. The leaves are elliptic and narrow, usually greenish-yellow.

Nectar collects in the base of the flower. Bees and birds find this nectar irresistible. Some of the syrup seeps to the outside making the flowers slightly sticky and explaining the plants common name - Honey Protea or Sugarbush.

The natural habitat of *Protea repens* is the southern tip of South Africa from sea level up to 4000 ft. So, when growing in California and Hawaii, they tolerate both coastal conditions and places where there are light frosts. The local South Africans used to boil down the flower bases to produce syrup used as cough syrup. If you continue the boiling you can get sugar. More about this next month.



## Wrapping up

This is the time of year to start (or continue) your Protea propagation program. Visit us online at <http://www.DiscoverProtea.com> for your Protea Starter Seed Packs.

For Protea care, arrangement and gift tips, visit our Website at <http://www.DiscoverProtea.com>. The Website also donates 10% of bouquet profits to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International.

Please feel free to e-mail me with any questions, comments or suggestions at [eugene@DiscoverProtea.com](mailto:eugene@DiscoverProtea.com)

Get those hands dirty!

Eugene.

A wise man once said...*"always surround yourself with people that are smarter than you are"*.

### Ask the Experts...

Below is a list of experts that I consult on a regular basis in order to get you most accurate and up-to-date information about growing Protea.

#### Experts in the field...

##### The Australian Native Plants Nursery

<http://www.australianplants.com/index.html> is a retail nursery specializing in ornamental trees and shrubs for Californian gardens. Their nursery grows many plants from the Australian protea family, such as banksia, grevillea, hakea and isopogon as well as small eucalypts, acacias and leptospermums. They also grow South African leucadendrons, leucospermums and proteas. Jo travels to Australia each year in search of new species to introduce into Californian gardens. They have seed and plants available for mail order. The nursery is operated by owner Jo O'Connell, an Australian horticulturist from Sydney. Contact Jo at 1-800-701-6517 or email: [ausnat@west.net](mailto:ausnat@west.net)

##### Barrels and Branches Nursery – Encinitas, California

Tucked away in the scenic coastal community of Encinitas (San Diego, CA) is a unique new nursery called Barrels and Branches. Meandering down the pathways you will enjoy the tranquil sounds of water and wildlife, while discovering many unusual plants that thrive in this area. This retail garden center has a side variety of perennials, succulents, California natives, fountains and fine pottery. In addition to being a full service nursery, maintenance and design services are also available. You will feel like you have discovered your own personal retreat, welcomed by friendly knowledgeable landscape professionals to assist you. At the recent *"Spring Home and Garden Show"* in San Diego, CA, they were awarded, 2nd Place Best in Show, Compatibility of Plant Material, Perfection in Nomenclature as well as three outstanding specimen awards. Visit them at <http://www.barrelsandbranches.com/> or contact Samantha or Danica at (760)753-2852.

##### Lawrence Kellar

Managing Director at Rainbow Protea in Fallbrook, California, Lawrence brings to the table Protea knowledge from both hemispheres. Lawrence is a second generation Protea grower from South Africa and an active member of the California Protea Association. He can be contacted at [lawrence@rainbowprotea.com](mailto:lawrence@rainbowprotea.com).