

Meet the Breeder

Brian Fitzpatrick

Brian graduated from Hawkesbury Agricultural College in “Horticulture” in the late 1970’s, and was lucky enough to spend the next 20 years as a specialist native plant propagator. He also worked on a Waratah Farm involved in the selection of superior forms for distribution to a newly emerging flower industry.

Brian has always viewed the Waratah as one of the most beautiful creations of nature and understood why it had captured the imagination of our forebears, inspiring designers,craftspersons and horticulturalists to work with its stunning beauty.

In the late 1980’s Brian was responsible for the propagation of the only white Waratah - ‘Wirrimbirra White’ given by Paul Nixon from Sydney University to Protea Australis, for distribution to the nursery and flower industry. It was the chance to work with this rare variety that triggered his interest in plant breeding, with the prospect of improving its hardiness and developing new colours and forms. At a similar time Brian made the friendship of the famous Tasmanian ‘plantslady’, the late Essie Huxley, who had a rare yellow Tasmanian Waratah growing in her beautiful garden.This further encouraged the breeding, together with the given opportunity to work with one of the most beautiful flowers in the world, right at the cutting edge of its development in horticulture.

With the help of his family, Brian selected a new breeding site in 2004 in the foothills of the Snowy Mountains.The past few years have seen the blossoming of many new varieties that will now go through the testing process for commercialisation.

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