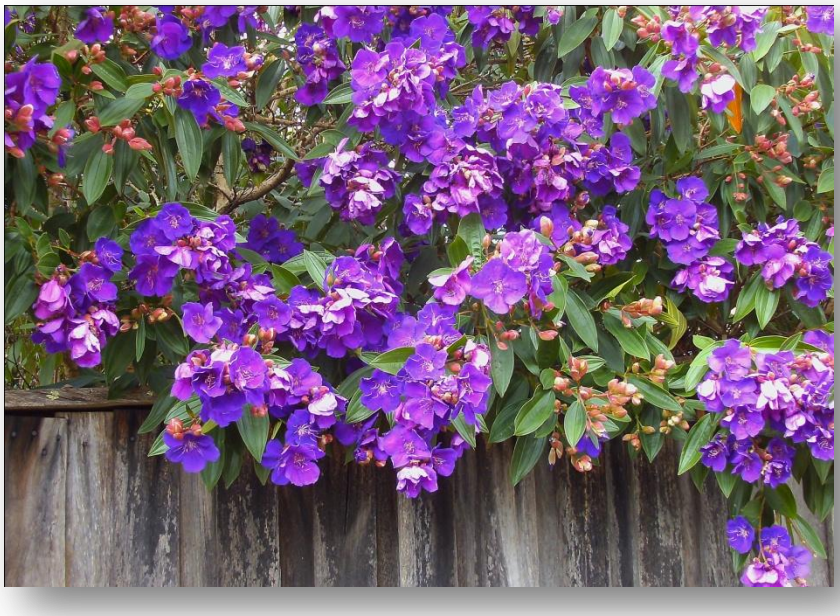
Plant of the Week

Tibouchina



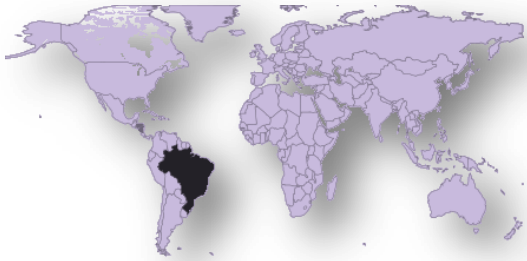
Lasiandra or Glory Bush

From late summer, through autumn and to winter, purple flowering *Tibouchina* trees and shrubs dominate Sydney gardens. For decades, these gaudy individuals from tropical rainforests of Central and South America have been popular with Australian gardeners. Wauchope, on the north coast of New South Wales, even celebrates a '**Lasiandra Festival'** in March each year. In the first half of last century, varieties of ***Tibouchina urvilleana*** (then known as ***T. semidecandra***) were common in Sydney gardens, later ***T. granulosa*** became very popular. In recent years, new varieties of ***Tibouchina lepidota***, bred by the late Ken Dunstan of Alstonville, have largely replaced the earlier species and varieties[1]. When Dunstan's outstanding variety ***Tibouchina lepidota* 'Alstonville'** is in full flower, it is almost impossible to see green leaves beneath the crown of purple flowers. If you prefer a **pink Lasiandra**, try ***Tibouchina granulosa* 'Kathleen',** another gem from Alstonville.



There are about 350 species of ***Tibouchina***, a genus in the family **Melastomataceae (*or* Melastomaceae).** Most genera are found in the New World, but others are found scattered through tropical areas of Africa, Asia and the Pacific, including 7 genera and 9 species in tropical regions of Australia[2]. However, ***Tibouchina*** is not everyone's cup of tea! In Hawaii, where plants reproduce vegetatively to form dense thickets in low-lying areas, ***Tibouchina*** species are listed as **noxious weeds**[3].

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World Distribution of *Tibouchina*



Maps: *Modified from* Missouri Botanical Garden: http://www.tropicos.org/Name/40014416?tab=distribution
http://www.tropicos.org/NamePage.aspx?nameid=42000202&tab=maps

[1] Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alstonville,_New_South_Wales
[2] Plantnet: http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfl&lvl=fm&name=MELASTOMATACEAE
[3] Hawaii Administrative Rules, Title 4 Department of Agriculture, Subtitle 6 Division of Plant Industry, Chapter 68, Noxious Weed Rules: http://www.hawaiiag.org/hdoa/adminrules/AR-68.pdf

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