

Association of Societies for Growing Australian Plants

GOODENIACEAE STUDY GROUP

Newsletter No. 1

Welcome to all active and passive members of the Study Group. Our thanks to the Association of Societies for Growing Australian Plants for the \$50 establishment grant for the group.

The Study Group will be involved with the following genera: Goodenia, Dampiera, Scaevola, Lechenaultia, Velliea, Anthotium, Symphyobasis, Pentaptilon, Selliera, Calogyne and Coopernookia. Most species are in the first 3 genera.

Housekeeping

Under ASGAP rules for study groups the financial year closes on 30th June. Subscription fee has been set at \$3 initially until we get a better idea of running costs.

Membership

Our membership list as of November is as follows:

Active members

Eileen Croxford	Albany W.A.
Hazel Dempster	Perth W.A.
Ida Jackson	Kingscote S.A.
Neil Marriott	Stawell Vic.
Royce and Jean Raleigh	Horsham Vic.
Philip Strong	Charmhaven N.S.W.
Bill Watkins	Smithfield N.S.W.

Passive members

Barbara Daly	Study Group Coordinator
	Cook A.C.T.
S.G.A.P. Geelong Group	

Reciprocal members

Alan Foster	Melaleuca Study Group
Max Hewett	Verticordia Study Group
Peter Olde	Grevillea Study Group
Peter Vaughan	Brachychiton and Allied Genera Study Group

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The aims of the Study Group are as follows:

1. The systematic collection and propagation of wild-sourced material of each species.
2. Distribution of the above material amongst active members for defined study group projects.
3. Design and organisation of studies on the horticultural requirements of each genus and species over as wide a range of growing conditions as possible.
4. Collection and collation of all extant written and photographic information relevant to the genera.
5. Dissemination of information through this newsletter and such journals as "Australian Plants".

Notes on Study Group aims

(1) Collections: As a matter of high priority I would like to set up one or preferably two collections of live material in each state or region. These collections will in fact have a very important function within the study group in that the members looking after them will be ipso facto sub-leaders with quite defined responsibilities to the study group. I believe that two collections per region are necessary simply because it is so easy to lose these species and vigilance will be required to keep our resources viable. The responsibilities of the collection "mindes" would be:

(i) to propagate and maintain collections of all plants of the family local to their region. Local collectors would send in any collected material (with source information) to their local "herbarium" for propagation and distribution to other regional collections. (ii) to specialise in one of the genera within the family, propagating material from this genus when required for specific group projects.

At this stage a collection will be sited at my residence (see address below) in the north of Sydney. I will be specialising in *Dampiera* primarily because I am having a great deal of success in propagating and maintaining them in containers although some trouble in growing them in the ground. I will be looking for volunteers to become sub-leaders in other areas so if you feel inclined please contact me.

Philip Strong from the Newcastle group of S.G.A.P. has offered to be newsletter editor for the group and his offer has been accepted with alacrity. Initially, however, I would like all correspondence to come to me at:

58 B NORMAN AVE, THORNLEIGH, N.S.W. 2120
PHONE (02) 481 9406

I will then send on copies of relevant letters to Phil. PLEASE all letters to include a stamped, self-addressed envelope if an answer is required.

If any member of the group is visiting Sydney please get in touch. Visitors are very welcome.

TASKS FOR ACTIVE MEMBERS

(i) List of Species Grown

This is really self explanatory. I do need to know exactly what material is available to the group. If the material is wild-sourced all the better. All sourcing information will need to be collated AS WELL AS SIGHTINGS. I would like to develop extensive distribution data on all the species and forms. Information to be listed includes actual collection or sighting data, soil type, aspect and plant associations. I hope to have source forms available in the near future to help ease the burden in this regard.

(ii) Description of Members' Gardens

I intend to keep a "dossier" on each member and I do need a clear idea of exactly what sort of growing conditions each member will be operating under. In future newsletters I intend to highlight particular gardens so that general comments have some relevance to the reader.

(iii) Flowering Times

I would like each active member to start recording flowering times and active growth periods for their garden. I hope to distribute appropriate forms for this purpose in the near future based on the Queensland SGAP model.

(iv) Photographs

I would like to obtain as complete a collection of "our" genera as possible. I need slides of each species "in the wild" both in close-up and within its plant association and in the garden (as a pot plant and/or growing in the ground) with some detail as to when and where the photographs were taken. I will copy the slides and return them. They will be used only with appropriate acknowledgement. NOTE: Single flower close-ups are also extremely useful as a cursory aid to identification.

In addition to Dennis's request for descriptions of member's gardens we would welcome short or not so short articles pertaining to Goodeniaceae. Please send any such material to Dennis Margan at the above address.

PLEASE REMEMBER

Any wild-sourced material must include details of collection location as an aid to correct identification. Some genus are proving extremely difficult to key and location and distribution is becoming critical information.

ARTICLE BY YOUR LEADER:

LECHENAULTIA IN EASTERN AUSTRALIA.

This is a resume of my little knowledge on the growing and propagation of the various species of Lechenaultia along the eastern seaboard. I have chosen this genus for the first newsletter simply because it is the genus that first stimulated my interest in this family and the one I am more familiar with. In addition the recent article by David Morrison on this family in the June issue of Australian Plants provides a good basis for the article. Further David has recently completed the revision of this genus for Flora of Australia which gives a good starting point. The other groups ~~are~~ not likely to be as easy. I must admit that I have to date had little success in growing most of these species however I do believe our body of knowledge is growing quickly. Each of the newly defined species (25) is discussed below in alphabetical order. I will discuss varieties in a later newsletter. You will notice that more than half of these species are not at present being cultivated and in fact are not even available to be cultivated at present so there is a lot work to do.

L. acutilobe Although material is in limited supply this species has been fairly widely propagated and grown in the eastern states but with little success. It is easy to propagate from cuttings but very difficult to keep growing on past the first year in both light and heavy soils. It certainly prefers a good supply of water and some degree of protection for its root system. However, having said that, the oldest plants I have seen over here are at Burrendong Arboretum in quite dry beds so humidity may also be a dominating factor particularly through late summer and autumn. This species needs a lot of more work as it is rare and endangered.

L. biloba A very popular species both here and overseas. There have been many variants propagated and cultivated but only a few have survived in the harsh realities of the commercial world. Tends to be grown as an annual when if given suitable conditions should survive a good number of years. Excellent specimens in the garden of Max Hewett in well drained heavy loam with a crushed quartzite mulch and appears quite happy at Burrendong. Most varieties of this species appear to sucker to varying degrees if given the right growing conditions. Some forms are extremely difficult to propagate vegetatively while others are easy at certain narrowly defined times of the year.

L. brevifolia Has not been available for study to date and needs to be collected. here is a species of Lechenaultia currently being grown both in NSW and Victoria which seems to bear some relationship to L. brevifolia. The flowers are a very dark blue terminal on leafless stems. However the key as outlined in Australian Plants does not appear to fit adequately so it may a variant or an undescribed species.

L. chlorantha This species is in cultivation with some success although I am finding it very difficult to hold specimens in pots.

Propagates easily from cuttings although older wood seems much less susceptible to fungal attack. Appears to like some water over our summers. Excellent specimens in Max Hewett's garden and Neil Marriott seems to grow it well at the Grampians area.

L. divaricata This needs to be collected for study.

L. expansa Not known to me. Very similar to *L. floribunda* so may very well be around as a form of the latter. Species needs to be collected and correctively identified before we can make any assessment.

L. filiformis Another species not being cultivated to my knowledge. Needs to be collected.

L. floribunda A number of forms of this species are in cultivation to my knowledge mainly in Victoria. A couple of nice plants growing in the rockery in National Botanic Gardens in Canberre. Seems to be easy to propagate by cuttings but is not popular at preaent in Sydney.

L. formosa The most popular species of *Lechenaultia* amongst gardeners but also one of the most heart-breaking. Very large numbers of colour variants but only a few have stood the test of time. This is usually related to their capacity to sucker strongly. All forms seem to prefer a heavier sub-soil with a light open stoney mulch (aids suckering, reduces fungal attack and maintains moisture level in the sub-soil). Can last 3-4 years if given right conditions. I have seen few plants that have seeded in Sydney which is probably an indication that few are grown past the early juvenile stage. Could also indicate lack of pollinators. I suspect that most plants are encouraged to flower too early reducing their capacity to persist through the hot humid summers in Sydney. Older plants seem to go through a dormancy over summer which may be hampered by the sporadic but at times very heavy summer rainfall. In pots they seem to thrive on regular light dosing with appropriate fertilizers and regular watering. They propagate very freely from cuttings or suckers.

L. heteromera Not popular in cultivation and very little propagating material available. Saw a magnificent plant of this species at Neil Marriott's garden some two years ago but didn't notice it at a recent visit. This plant was about a metre across with pale blue flowers around the periphery. Unfortunately this species tends to become very bare across the centre of the plant. I have found this species difficult to propagate but relatively easy to maintain in pots with a relatively heavy soil mix.

L. hirsuta A very spectacular species in flower but a real bugger to keep growing. I have difficulty both propagating and growing this species and I know of only one plant of any substance in Sydney (Max Hewett). This species needs a lot of work. One of the problems is its tendency to die down in its dormant period sometimes forever.

L. juncea I have never had this species and it does need to be collected and tried in cultivation.

L. laricina This is a rare and considerably endangered species in its natural habitat but is more widespread in cultivation. It is most underated in my opinion and has been mistaken for a form of *L. formosa* on a number of occasions. It appears much longer-lived than the latter and tends to flower in the summer months which is a bonus. It is very floriferous and in my opinion is one of the hardiest of the *Lechenaultias*. Easy to grow from cutting.

L. linearoides A very good garden subject which is very under-used probably because "it is very difficult to propagate". The latter is true for most of the year however if you strike the right time the success rate is nearly 100%. In Sydney the right time is August-September. Availability is severely hampered by the difficulty in maintaining vigour in these struck cuttings however lime may be the secret. Appears to like the heavier soils and flowers profusely with flowers very similar to those of *L. macrantha*.

L. longiloba This is one of my favourites with lush new growth and beautiful pink flowers. Soil requirements are unknown although Max Hewett has had a lot of trouble keeping this species going in his heavier soils. Strikes fairly easily from semi-hard growth. I have lost my specimen plant (I went overseas) and I am waiting avidly for Max Hewett to let me have some of his plant (after all I did give it to him).

L. macrantha Would make a superb horticultural plant if it didn't die so easily. Needs heavy sub-soil to maintain moisture level and does appear to need very hot conditions during Summer so that it can go into dormancy. Should never be allowed to flower profusely in its initial season particularly cutting-grown plants. Propagates easily from cuttings but seems to appreciate adequate supply of water when young to maintain vigour.

L. ovata Unknown in cultivation and only recently named. Needs to be collected although a number of difficulties arise given its location in Kakadu.

L. papillata Another unknown species in cultivation. Looks similar to *L. floribunda*. Needs to be collected.

L. pulvinaris Little known in cultivation but looks a terrific prospect. Very rare in the wild and needs propagating to avoid extinction.

L. stenosepala Again not known in cultivation.

L. striata Needs collecting.

L. subcymosa Had a small plant of this species but since lost it.

L. superba This species has been cultivated to some extent with varying degrees of success. It is gazetted as rare and endangered but there is sufficient material available to enable some studies to be undertaken. Potted specimens seem to require a lot of water through our Summer, but don't like to get their feet wet. Well-drained heavier

loams seem to hold the answer. Relatively long-lived for this family so species could be valuable horticulturally.

L. tubiflora Number of colour variants of this specie have been grown widely and successfully. Needs good stoney mulch to maintain sub-soil moisture in light loams. The brilliant red form grows well for Max Hewett in heavier loams again with a stone mulch. Strikes well from carefully prepared cuttings and suckers. Very slow growing but flowers profusely.

Apart from the above species there are also plants around referred to as L. helmsii. This appears not to be a legal name. From the few examples I have seen it is similar to *L. juncea* or possibly a variant of *L. floribunda*. I am currently propagating plants and hopefully it can be more closely identified shortly.

SPECIAL MENTION

I would like to extend special thanks to Ida Jackson on Kangaroo Island in S. Australia and Eileen Croxford at Albany in W. Australia who have already started to collect material for the group. Ida in particular is quickly running out of local species and variants to collect both as propagating material and pressed specimens. It is a great help and inspiration to have such keen workers in our small group. I would also like to thank Peter Vaughan who is an inveterate collector around the Sydney region.

In the next newsletter we hope to include an article by Dennis Margan about the commonly available variants of *Lechenaultia formosa*, *L. biloba* and *L. tubiflora*.

Goodbye for now from Dennis Margan, Leader
and Philip Strong, Editor
