

## Association of Societies for Growing Australian Plants

Goodeniaceae Study Group Newsletter No. 14 ISSN 0819-8527

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Hello again people,

This is unfortunately a very short newsletter as there has not been a lot of correspondence or news. In actual fact this newsletter has had a long gestation period and only guilt eventually got it off the ground.

I hope all members enjoyed there Xmas/New Year break and are enthusiastically gardening again after the heat, bushfires, droughts, and other sundry disasters. New Year in Sydney was a particularly nerve-wracking time. The much-publicised fires started only a few kilometres from my house but thankfully went the other way from their normal pattern and the areas of bushland immediately adjacent to my house were unscathed. I would not normally consider myself in a highly vulnerable position even though I have heavy bush on two sides of my block of land and of course I have all my cultivated native plants actually on the block. However over those 2-3 days the combination of high temperature and very strong gusting winds was horrific and particularly daunting. You were vulnerable wherever you lived in Sydney and its environs. I chose to live in such a bush environment and in so doing I accept the possibility of some threat to life and limb. Thankfully, as it turned out, relatively few people were put at great personal risk and loss of property was relatively light considering the enormous forces unleashed. It is therefore a little disappointing to see the knee-jerk reactions of our politicians and in fact in some of the reactions expressed within the society about what amounts to a scorched earth policy to remove the danger of bushfires from built-up areas. I would personally be very upset at the thought of not having my little patch of bushland close nearby whatever the possible consequences.

On matters less controversial, I have been able to get a little more gardening done recently and have planted out a variety of *Scaevolas*, *Dampieras* and *Goodenias* although as I mentioned recently the lack of variety in our current gene pool worries me. I keep getting the feeling that I am just re-propagating the same species over and over again and not making significant progress towards introducing new species. The worry of course is that enthusiasm will wane if our efforts are not being rewarded by visible progress.

I have embarked on a small research project of my own for this newsletter looking at some of the problems associated with maintaining *Lechenaultia hirsuta* in Sydney. More about that later. And for the next newsletter, I promise a fairly comprehensive update on my successes and failures over the past

decade of growing Goodeniaceae on the Hawkesbury Sandstone in Sydney.

### **Financial Report**

Balance at 30/6/93	\$ 185.14	
Shares (Credit Union)	\$ 10.00	
Total		\$ 195.14

Income		
Individual subscriptions	\$ 80.00	
Group subscriptions	\$ 132.00	
Interest	\$ 8.02	
Total Income		\$ 220.02

Expenditure		
Newsletter production	\$ 22.80	
Propagation aids	\$ 23.00	
Postage	\$ 22.50	
Government Taxes	\$ 0.13	
Total Expenditure		\$ 68.43

Balance at 30/6/94	\$ 336.73	
Shares	\$ 10.00	
Total		\$ 346.73

### **Membership**

In terms of membership there is nothing to report this newsletter. The membership currently is static and subscriptions as usual are now due for 1994-5. As you can see above, our funds are currently very healthy and I can see no need to increase subscriptions above the current rate of \$5.00/year into the foreseeable future.

Current active members in the group are as below however for the next newsletter there will be some pruning in line with degree of unfinanciality (if that is a word!)

### **Canberra**

Geoff Clarke, 26 Henry St, Cook, ACT, 2614

### **New South Wales**

Burrendong Arboretum, Tara Rd, Mumbil, 2820

Phil Hughes, 121 Burwood Rd, Whitebridge, 2290

Jonathan Lidbetter, 29 George St, Pennant Hills, 2120

Robert Miller and A. Stevenson, 7 Sylvan Grove, Picnic Point, 2213

Margaret Randall, R.M.B. Tocumwal, 2714

Philip Strong, 6 Jetty Ave, Charmhaven, 2263

### **Queensland**

Klaus Querengasser, P.O. Box 73, St Lucia, Brisbane, 4067

Pat Shaw, 5 Fleetwood St, Macgregor, 4109

Jan Sked, P.O. Box 41, Lawton, 4501

### **South Australia**

Ida Jackson, 7 Centenary Ave, Kingscote, Kangaroo Is, 5223

Gary Leske, 18 Leonard Ave, Port Pirie, 5540

### **Tasmania**

Jeanette Closs, 176 Summerleas Road, Kingston, 7050.

## **Victoria**

Joan Hales, McDonalds Rd, Glen Alvie, 3979  
Rita Luff, 95 Seebeck Rd, Rowville, 3178  
Bruce Schroder, 17 Jubilee Rd, Montrose, 3765  
Beverley Truscott, 22 Acacia Ave, South Oakleigh, 3167

## **Western Australia**

Mary Squire, Box 23, Mukinbudie, W.A. 6479

## **Overseas members**

Henri de Bono, 12 Allee des Chasseurs, 78230 Le Peco, France  
Dino Pellizzo, 290 chemin de Leouse, 06220 Vallauris, France

## **Research Project**

As I mentioned above I have embarked on a small research project of my own. If you have followed the progress of my efforts to propagate and grow *Lechenaultia spp* over the years you will know that I have become more and more pessimistic about their potential in Sydney. One of the most difficult to maintain has been *L. hirsuta* which is unfortunate as it is also one of the most spectacular. Even Max Hewett has admitted difficulty although he has continued to propagate the species in the hope of someday making a breakthrough. The problem seems to be that, although cuttings will strike reasonably readily, they do not grow. The root system remains very fine and delicate. Rarely do the rooted cuttings thrive with potting-on and few get to the stage of planting-out.

Some months ago (about April) Max offered me a couple of rooted cuttings and a little propagation material. I have always maintained that the best growth I have ever achieved with *Lechenaultia spp* has been in large tubs containing a very light soil mix and the two plants I received went into this system under light artificial watering. They died unfortunately although one hung on for a couple of months. They made very little growth and the root ball was almost non-existent.

At the same time the cutting material (about 10 cuttings) was put into a light mix of propagating sand and vermiculite (in a group pot). The hormone used was Clonex (for semi-hardwood) with which I have recently had an excellent success rate. After about 2 months most of the cuttings were thriving, so much so that, rather than pot the cuttings on I decided to leave the cuttings in the plastic igloo for longer than normal to try and maximise root growth. At this point I must admit that I forgot about them until Max happened to inquire about their progress one day. To my surprise about six of the cuttings were thriving. One or two had put on 10-12 cms of growth and all were shooting vigorously. At this stage (the beginning of July) I potted the cuttings on but instead of hardening them off I decided to put them back in the plastic house to see whether they would continue to grow. The theory was, that in WA these plants would be actively growing in cold wet conditions and I could possibly maximise growth by mimicking these conditions. I have so far achieved more success with this species than ever before. This is not saying much but is encouraging. All cuttings have settled down to good growth. Next comes the hard part. I cant keep them in such humid conditions throughout our summer (at least I dont think I can!). I have decided to put three out in the elements about November

and let them fend for themselves. The other three will go out also but under grass. The latter will only receive water through the soil, not the foliage. I will report progress later!

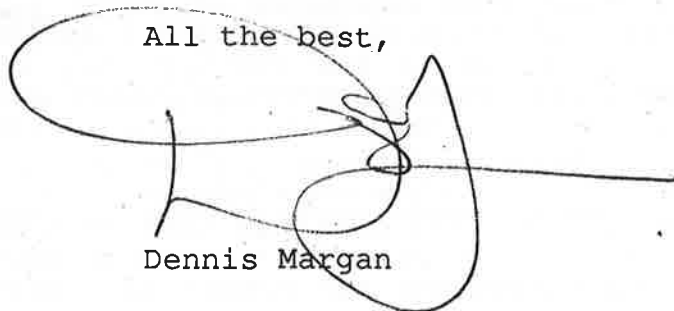
### Correspondence

I received a letter recently from Ida Jackson on Kangaroo Island (I must make the effort to visit there soon!). Included in the letter was some cutting material of *Goodenia amplexicans*, a very common species on the island. I had in fact lost my original source material of this species and I am hopeful that some of the material sent will survive the rigours of my plastic houses (the material does tend to go off quickly and become very sticky).

I have received a letter from a Ms E. Patricia Wilkie of Armadale in Victoria concerning the species *Goodenia eatoniana*, one of the blue *Goodenias* from W.A. Her interest arises from the fact that it was named after a member of her family, Henry Francis Eaton, by F. von Mueller and is described in his **Fragments Phytographiae Australiae**, vol. 8 (Melbourne 1872-74), p.186. Patricia is writing a book about the career of H.F. Eaton who became Under-Secretary in the Victorian Civil Service before his retirement and return to England in 1892. Apparently Mueller wanted to honour him "for his active support for all kind of scientific endeavour" (assistance apparently unknown!). They were neighbours in South Yarra, old friends of Dr Edward Davy (Eaton's father-in-law) and fellow members of the Royal Society and its forerunner, the Philosophical Institute of Victoria. In searching the Herbaria, Patricia obtained a reference from Mrs Sinkora but no correspondence mentioning any but a personal connection between the two men. Patricia has asked if anyone has a cutting, seed or a plant or even a photograph of this species which could be used in the preparation of her book. Unfortunately I don't know of anyone with any live material. I find that I have a copy of a slide which I thought came from Max Hewett who has since denied all knowledge of it! If anyone can help the address is E. Patricia Wilkie, 130 Kooyong Road, Armadale 3141, Victoria.

On a general note, I have had a query from the Central Coast Group in NSW to participate in the Central Coast Flora Festival during September (8-11th). Unfortunately I will be in Europe about this time and cannot personally participate however it is possible that Jonathan Lidbetter will be able to represent the group.

All the best,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dennis Margan