

Leader - Doris Phelps, 17 Fourth Street, Loxton. 5333.

First I must explain why it has been so long between newsletters. One reason was that I had very little feedback after the last one, and therefore had very little material for another one.

The second reason is that about nine months ago we decided to sell our orchard and retire into the town, and from then until September, when we moved, I was busy preparing to move. As well as sorting through household goods, I did a lot of propagating and potting up, ready to plant a new garden. Since then we have been just as busy settling in.

I was sad to leave all my lovely bottlebrushes, but our new block is larger than most town blocks, about $\frac{3}{4}$ acre, so I will have room to plant them all again.

The people who have taken over our previous property are interested in the native plantings, but, having four young children, have little time for gardening. They tell me that the bottlebrush plantation, being some distance from the house, has not been watered since we left. This has provided quite a test for the bottlebrushes, as we have had a very severe summer, with one heatwave after another, and about 30 days so far with temperatures above the century. As well, it has been fairly dry. In the months since we left, only 3 inches of rain have fallen, with 2 inches of that being recorded in October. In spite of this, when I saw the bottlebrushes recently, it was only the youngest ones that had succumbed, with all the established ones still looking quite good. It will be interesting to have another look at them at the end of summer.

CALLISTEMON VIOLACEOUS.

Through the seed bank I have been distributing seed of a form of *C. violaceus* which was said to have brushes of a beautiful wine colour. My plant of this form had its first flowers last spring, and they certainly were a lovely rich colour, much deeper than my other *C. violaceus*. *C. lilacinus* also flowered for the first time, but it seemed to be identical to *C. violaceus*. All three have the same growth habit and foliage.

On page 253 in "Australian Plants", September 1964, Ernest E. Lord wrote that *C. lilacinus* is "frequently called *C. 'Violaceus'*, a name which seems to have no valid basis". It is to be hoped that during the revision of the Callistemons, which is at present being conducted, this kind of confusion will be sorted out.

SEED BANK

I believe that some of the *C. subulatus* seed that I sent out was not very viable. I now have a fresh lot, which I have tested and which germinated well.

Seed in stock at present is *C. violaceus*, *subulatus*, *rigidus*, *paludosus*, *linearis*, *speciosus*, *linearifolius*, *brachyandrus*, *shiresii*, *citrinus*, *macropunctatus*, *phoeniceus*, *viminalis*, 'Berundah Station', 'Tinaroo', 'Compacta', 'Injune', 'Guyra Hybrid', and small amounts of *polandii*, *comboynensis*, and *viridiflorus*.

As I have no mature callistemons in my new garden to collect seed from, I will appreciate any that members can spare.

From Anne Baden, 36 Carstenz Street, Griffith A.C.T.

In March 1978 I obtained some *Callistemon pallidus* 'Purple' seed from the Study Group's seed bank. Five seedlings were planted out in the following January and February in our bush garden at Major's Creek on the Southern Tablelands of N.S.W. Despite two years of below average rainfall the seedlings have grown well and one is currently in flower (November). The spikes are about 8cm long and a strong rosy purple, indicating a tendency for the purple form to come true from seed.

Frosts on November 1st and 2nd damaged new leaf growth on these plants and other species of *Callistemon* as well.

Noisy friar birds have been observed feeding on *Callistemon* flowers without causing any obvious damage. *C. 'Endeavour'* and *C. citrinus 'Splendens'* are currently in flower with spikes showing damage where the stamens have been cut off just below the petals. Crimson rosellas are suspected as the culprits as I have observed them snipping at flowers on the local swamp gum *Eucalyptus ovata*. In both cases I presume that the immature seeds are an attractive food source.

Our property is a wildlife refuge and the bush garden has been planted for the intrinsic beauty of the native plants and also as an attractant to nectar feeding birds. I did not anticipate having shaved bottlebrushes but cannot begrudge sharing our *Callistemon* bounty during the present serious drought.

From L.J. Daniels, Research Station, P.O. Box 201, Biloela, 4715.

One problem that I am getting with *Callistemons*, and it is a fairly common one in eastern Central Queensland, is scale attack. The scale is small, yellow-light-brown, flat and round. Infestation can range from mild to very severe. Severe attacks can kill the plant fairly quickly if not treated. Infestation is not general. Some plants are not affected while others a short distance away can be severely affected. Treatment with white oil plus an insecticide gives some control but it has to be repeated fairly regularly. Most species seem to be attacked.

Have you any information on scale attack of *Callistemons*? It seems to have become much more common in the last few years. A few melaleucas such as *M. decora* and *M. linariifolia* sometimes are affected but to a lesser extent.

(I do not have any information as requested by Mr. Daniels. Can any other member help? Scale on other plants is sometimes fostered and protected by ants, in which case it helps if you can get rid of the ants. In the home garden, soapy water can be used as a spray on some types of scale. It does not kill the scale's predators, as insecticide does.)

SUBSCRIPTIONS

As you have had so little value for your money during the past year, do not send any further subscriptions for the time being. I will let you know when I need more.

I am sorry that this newsletter is smaller than previous ones. I will be pleased to hear from anyone who can contribute anything toward the next one.