

This is the last time I will be compiling the newsletter. Because of pressure of other responsibilities, I am about to hand over the leadership of the Study Group to Harry Infield, who has been a member for some time. His address is Mr. H.S. Infield, Demesne Farm, Coomba Road, Coomba Park, N.S.W. 2428. I have found him to be a very interested and active member, and I am sure he will be an enthusiastic leader.

I will miss the many friendly letters I have received as leader, but I hope that I will not entirely lose touch with all of you.

I shall send Mr. Infield the seeds I now have in the seed bank, and I hope that members will also contribute to it and help him to build up stocks.

I will also, of course, send on whatever money is left in the account after this letter is posted, and I remind you that 1982 subs should now be paid, and should be sent to Mr. Infield at the above address. I will provide him with a list of those which have already been paid.

Wishing you happy gardening and a happy relationship with the new leader,

Doris Phelps.

From Aileen Bennier, Peake, 5301. (Written in November)

The callistemons are really lovely at the moment and we have fourteen different ones in flower. From the seeds you forwarded we have 'Pallidus Purple', 'Prolific Pink', and 'Guyra Hybrid' in flower. The first of those is really lovely - a light purple but very prolific - the second also plenty of flowers but nearer red in colour, although I have noticed that the brushes are more pink when fading. 'Guyra' is also massed with flowers. I think the loveliest of all is *C. macropunctatus* which is also flowering for the first time, and a close second comes *C. violaceus* - the deep-shaded one. We have three of these, all coming from different sources, and also have two *C. lilacinus* yet to flower, which appear to have the same foliage.

Last April at the Adelaide plant sale one of the members gave us some cuttings of 'Reeves Pink'. We had a 100% strike and some of them even flowered in the pots. This year the ones we planted out flowered - a deep pink flower and really lovely. Like you we found that all callistemons took the very hot summer quite well and the only one we lost was a small *C. citrinus*. The only two we have found up to date that are not doing well are *C. brachyandrus* and *C. teretifolius*. Despite that we are amazed that the others have done so well considering that many of them prefer dampish conditions - something they don't get with our 15 inch rainfall.



From Lindsay Daniels, P.O. Box 201, Biloela, 4715

I am enclosing a small packet of seed of a *Callistemon* recently collected from plants growing on the summit of "Lord's Table Mountain", a flat-topped mountain in the Peake Range, N.E. of Capella in Central Queensland. It was collected by a party from the new mining town of Dysart. It is probably the first seed ever collected from these plants. A specimen sent to the Queensland Herbarium was identified as *C. polandii*. However it is different from the more common types of this species. Mr. A. Podlich of Dysart who saw the plants and is very interested in native plants describes it as being shorter than *C. polandii* (to 6') much branched, growing in a dry position with only about 20 plants in the group. Brushes are smaller and shorter than those of *C. polandii* but are gold-tipped. The fact that it is growing in a dry position on top of a mountain is not typical of *C. polandii* which tends to prefer fairly good moist sites.

The mountain it is growing on is probably of basalt origin, as the Peake Range is mostly the remains of old volcanoes. They are only about 70 miles (in a direct line) north of Blackdown Tableland where another unidentified *Callistemon* species is growing. But while Blackdown is of sandstone origin, Peake Down Range is not, and the two *Callistemons* are apparently very different.

I have planted some of the seed, and the seedlings are now about 1 cm. in height. As a tiny seedling it, although similar, is not the same as *C. polandii*. The seed is very fertile, so don't plant it too thickly. I would appreciate it, if some of it could be distributed to growers who are prepared to grow it for propagation either from seed or cuttings.

This year has been a good year for *Callistemons* with above average winter rainfall followed by a dry spring. Insect pests generally appear to be less than in most years. The scale of *Callistemons*, although still present, is much less widespread and severe. Most species have flowered well. My *C. 'Ewan Road'* in particular was very attractive with large clusters of drooping red brushes which reached nearly to ground level in this relatively small species. The *C. viminalis* in the local creeks flowered prolifically.

C. 'Captain Cook' seems to be a very variable species, but I have seen some good specimens.

With regard to *Callistemons* being of horticultural rather than of economic value (Newsletter No.7), although this would be largely true, *C. viminalis* in particular does have some value in reducing erosion of river and creek banks and beds. This species has the ability to grow on the beds and banks of streams which are normally non-running but which after heavy rain become large quick-flowing streams. Even after many days completely submerged, when the water falls they are still there and although often mud-covered show little effect from being under water.

ONE-SIDED BOTTLEBRUSHES & OVERNIGHT

by Anne Boden

Persistent drought for more than two years has slowed the growth of my bottlebrushes on a rural property in southern N.S.W. but the application of Osmocote together with water pumped from the dam produced a pleasing bud formation last spring. All appeared set for a good flowering during November and December.

However, a heavy frost and an unseasonal light snowfall during the first week of November spoiled the anticipated flowering. Considerable shedding of mature but unopened flower buds occurred in many species and cultivars.

In some cases the bud drop was total leaving a bare length of branch behind the growing shoot. Frost damage to these shoots necessitated pruning back to lateral buds on last season's growth.

In other cases frost damage produced a different type of 'one-sided bottlebrush', distinct from the Western Australian *Calothamnus*, a genus closely related to *Callistemon*. These frosted spikes lost most of their buds except those on the protected underside. Eventually they flowered in the distorted form of brushes with a narrow band of flowers only on the lower side.

Apart from obvious bud damage the cold snap also had an effect on seed set. Even where flowering occurred, virtually no capsules have been retained on the plants. I attribute this seed setting failure to frost damage to the developing ovules and/or pollen, rather than pollinating insects and birds which apparently survived the cold spell.

A CORNISH GARDENER'S BOTTLEBRUSHES

by Anne Boden

Australian plants generally are not adapted to withstand the severe winter conditions endured over much of Britain. However parts of western Ireland and Scotland, and the English counties of Cornwall and Devon experience much milder conditions due to the Gulf Stream, the clockwise ocean current which circulates in the northern Atlantic Ocean bringing warm water and mild air to the high latitudes on the eastern side of the ocean.

This climatic pattern means that successful outdoor cultivation of Australian plants in Britain is mostly confined to these milder regions.

In "Memories and Gardens" (Collins, 1964), Marion Howard Spring describes a lifetime's gardening experiences reaching a climax in an extensive garden in the Cornish coastal town of Falmouth. As well as an unspecified eucalypt and *Acacia dealbata*, the mimosa of the European florist trade, her Australian plants include two bottlebrushes.

She writes: - In front of the greenhouse, in a southern aspect, we planted a *Callistemon lanceolatus* (syn. *C. citrinus*), the crimson Bottle Brush. This has done extremely well, and is most spectacular when in flower. It has had its photo taken as many times as a film star. *Callistemon salignus*, the yellow Bottle Brush, is not nearly so robust, and has not yet flowered.