

SOCIETY FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS

CALOTHAMNUS STUDY GROUP

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We have decided to begin a Calothamnus Study Group, as this excellent genus is not as well known as it should be. My idea, and I am open to other suggestions, is to compare different species so as to become aware of their horticultural benefits. There will be many differing aspects to look into, soil types, frost and drought resistance, general climatic differences, ease of propagation either seed or cutting and the actual look of the plants taking into consideration both shrub type and flowering habit. We are lucky that the interested people in this subject cover a wide range, actually nearly every state is represented so this should be a good start. I will send a list of members with the next newsletter when we get things rolling.

As yet I have no seed to start a seed bank, so hope that anyone who can get some could send it so we can make a start. Although experiences in the actual propagation of the plants will be important, knowledge of established plants are also needed, so members who can give help in either areas are needed.

While waiting for me to get report sheets printed members could give me reports of existing Calothamnus growing in your gardens. Please include soil types, degree of sun and shade, frequency of watering, effects of climate including frost severity, frequency of rain and temperatures experienced. Resistance to disease and insect attack would also be helpful.

Fees for study groups are \$2 so it would be of great assistance if you could send this when you join the Study Group. If I have to buy seed I will have to put a small charge on this.

When we get more members of our group we should be able to start a cutting exchange, but more about this aspect later. If anyone has access to cuttings could you let me know so that when this is started I will have some names on hand. The amount of material that is available would be a help too.

As I will be collecting as much material as possible for each species we can study I would greatly appreciate any coloured photos showing growth patterns of individual Calothamnus species as well as those of flowers.

Jean Konks from Victoria has had great success growing Calothamnus quadrifidus and C. villosus without taking any precaution against fungal attack. She also took cuttings from very young plants, having remarkable success with these as she only lost two out of twelve cuttings. They developed exceptional root systems in only four weeks. She took 10 cm long tip cuttings, stripped the lower half of leaves and planted them in a mixture of sand and peat moss after dipping the ends in rooting powder. This was done in early January and the cuttings kept in a hot house and sprayed twice a day with a hose. As soon as I read this I tried some cuttings of Calothamnus torulosa and C. villosus. As I haven't a hot house I put each cutting in a nursery bag and covered it with a glass jar. I am pleased to say they are doing well.

N.T.

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The seeds Maisie Shipley sent are very welcome. Even if the species is not actually known it can be identified when the plant has flowered. If there are any flowers available from an unknown species it is best to press some (with leaves) and send along together with some seed capsules to get identified. But even if this cannot be done it is worthwhile collecting seed as the plant can be identified later

Lyndal Thorburn from A.C.T. has a *Calothamnus quadrifidus* growing successfully, flowered well in its first spring, but her *C. sanguinius* died back in its first winter, sprouted again but only grew to a few cm as yet.

Rhoda Jeavons from coastal N.S.W. has a *Calothamnus asper* doing well on a very exposed site in sandy soil. There was leafmould added to the soil before planting. It flowered when only about 6" high.

Anne McGarry has noticed *Callothamnus villosus* growing very well just below huge granite outcrops in Queensland.

I hope all the interested people will join the Study Group and encourage some of their friends to do the same. No one need have any special knowledge or skills as the information needed is for use in growing *Calothamnus* in ordinary gardens, so as long as you are willing to keep records and send them to me that is all that is needed. Hoping to hear from you soon.

All the best.

*Barb.*

Dear Jo,

I have sent this to the interested people. Hope it is O.K. There are quite a few left over in case of future members.

*all the best*

*Barb.*

