

CALOTHAMNUS STUDY GROUP

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What a great start to our dried specimen collection! Kaye Bartlett has sent in 24 beautifully mounted specimens. There are a few to be identified, so I hope it isn't too long before I get around to doing this. I am still waiting for an updated description of Calothamnus species.

Thank you to those who have sent in their subs for 1984. Here is a rundown of our financial position, at the end of 1983.

Income.		Expenses.	
Membership fees	\$22-	Newsletters	\$10-12
Seed sales	2-25	Seeds	14-82
Donation	1-	Stamps	4-32
		Stationary	3-36
	<u>25-25</u>		<u>32-62</u>

Actually this is very pleasing as there is enough paper and stencils for this year, so our expenses will be much less.

Although we are as yet a very small group, we are lucky that the members are widespread, three in South Australia, two in Victoria, one in the A.C.T., and five in N.S.W.. These cover a range of climates but it would be useful to have some Queensland members. I would be interested to know of different species of Calothamnus suitable for various climates and soils, maybe there will turn out to have a good range for quite a few species, but the only way to find out is to have as many species growing in a wide range of climates as possible. So if you could encourage any friends to grow Calothamnus it could help with our store of knowledge. Reports of failures, especially if the reason is clear, are also very important.

I was very interested in a letter from Lyndal Thorburn. She had a Calothamnus frost bitten last winter but it seemed to be surviving. But it gave up in the spring. Lyndal had previously thought that when this has happened with other plants it was the dryness of spring, but this could not have been so this spring. The same thing happened to my *C. torulosus*. I was very disappointed as it seemed to be recovering well. We had a particularly lush spring following our many years of drought and the weeds seemed to overpower the recovering plant. So I have planted another in a more exposed area and will cover it from bad frosts and see what happens.

So I think it important to see if we can find species which will grow well in coastal areas with wet summers as well as some that will withstand heavy frosts. Our South Aust. members will be very valuable as Calothamnus seem to do well there so those grown in that area will be our controls. We will need their descriptions to see what species will be attractive for gardens. So keep the descriptions coming in, especially for the more attractive types, either for flowers or colour or shape of the bush.

If anyone needs any more report sheets please let me know. There will also be some Seed Propagation Sheets ready which I will send with any seed, but if you are planting any seed other than the group's seed just let me know and I will forward a sheet.

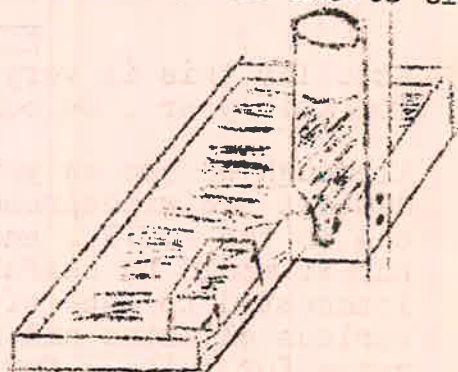
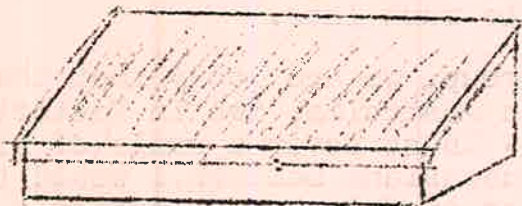
Rhoda Jeavons has sent a photo of her Calothamnus asper which is certainly a very attractive, dense, greyish bush. It will be interesting to see how it goes during this wet summer as it could be a good species for growing in humid areas.



A recent letter has made me realize that I need to say a bit about propagation. But first of all I must say that there is no right or wrong way to propagate seeds. Whatever works is O.K. The main things to remember are that the seed must never dry out, fine seed cannot be planted too deeply and once the seed has germinated good drainage is essential. Here are a few hints for beginners.

A good mix for overhead watering system could be 5 parts sand, 3 light loam & 2 peat. For a capillary semi-automatic system the percentage of sand could be much higher.

Containers should not be filled completely with mix and seed sprinkled thinly. An old salt shaker could be used. Cover lightly with fine sand and if possible press firmly with a piece of wood the same size as the seed punnet. These punnets could be placed in a shade shed or under a shady tree, but not too deeply shaded as the germinating seeds need plenty of light. But a propagating frame gives much better results as more moisture can be kept near the seeds. This can be covered by polythene able to be rolled up, removable glass frames or sheets of clear fibreglass.



A semi-automatic system can be made in a waterproof tray (polythene can be used to waterproof a large container). This should be about half filled with sand, into which the seed punnets are placed. The depth can be varied to obtain required water level in punnets. It is a good idea to put punnets into sand and wait until thoroughly moistened before planting. Fix a large bottle of water upside down in the sand with its neck above the bottom of the tray of sand. As soon as the seeds germinate the punnets need to be taken out of the tray.

In both systems the little plants should be potted on when very small, watered well and protected from full sun for a few days.

Thanks to everyone for all the help and hope it won't be too long before we can start forming some helpful conclusions.

Good luck,

Barb

Welcome to the Calothamnas Study Group. I had typed out this newsletter before receiving your letter, so hope there will be someone to be active in the group.

all the very best

Barb