

NEWSLETTER NO. FOUR July, 1984

Thanks to all the members of the study group who have sent in record sheets. From your records I would say that *Calothamnus asper*, *C. gilesi*, *C. blespharospermus* (superb), *C. quadrifidus*, *C. sanguineus*, *C. validus*, & *C. villosus* are the most attractive species. So if you have any other species to add to this list please let me know. By the way some of the same species were not as impressive, so as more reports come in I will see if this has anything to do with locality.

There are a couple of experiments I would like to try over the next couple of years. The first one would have to be done by people with established plants. When the weather warms up a bit could someone try a few germination tests. I would like to know if older seed is as viable as newer.

Gather some seed from last season's flowers and also from the season before, keeping the seed separate, and either sow the seed separately or test viability by putting the seed on damp cotton wool or similar (wettex etc is good), covering with the same and keeping damp until germinated. Could volunteers let me know so I can send a report sheet. Also if some of the same seed is kept for a year & tested and again after two years it would help in understanding viability of the seed. Lyndal Thorburn has done a wonderful job in collecting a great many reports from various people in Canberra. I was very surprised to learn of their successes even though frosts experienced were very many and severe! Even some quite badly frost damaged plants have survived. So I'm beginning to think that there is more to frost deaths than temperature. Maybe soil type has a lot to do with them not recovering after being frostbitten so I am trying many different methods for planting. I will plant some straight into the ground, a rather heavy clay loam, some in a raised bed mixed with sand &/or gravel, and some in pots with different soil mixtures. In the winter I will put some pots in more protected positions and leave some in the open. There should be some results from this! If anyone has similar frost problems you could let me know.

One very interesting report that Lyndal sent was from Harry Bell in Armidale. He said that he found *Calothamnus* very hardy but because they produce their leaf growth in our summer they never display their blooms like the do in the west. As bird attractors they are supreme. A colleague has tested all of his plants for sucrose content and finds that *Calothamnus* are out in front! This really makes them well worth growing. Lyndal also said that the S.A. Woods & Forest Dept. has a good mail order plant service from its branch in Murray Bridge (box 752) If anyone is interested they could write for more particulars.

Phyllis Dadswell has read that some species of *Calothamnus* are listed as endangered species. These are *Calothamnus lehmannii*, *C. longissimus*, *C. pachystachyus*, *C. preissii*, *C. rupestris* & *C. schauri*. She has some of these growing herself. It is very important to try to grow these

endangered species in our gardens even though I realize it is best to protect the natural environment of these plants. Maybe the ones we grow will save a species from extinction. I will be making an effort to grow these in the Arboretum.

Another thing I am working on is to get a list of Calothamnus species which are easy to grow by cuttings. So could you send me results of any propogating you have done by cuttings. Kaye Bartlett sent me a lot of beautifully prepared cuttings, and as I haven't a glasshouse as yet any of the species which take will be ones easily grown by cutting. I just hopetthat this extremcly wet winter won't affect them too much. I will let you know how they go in the next newsletter.

Thanking everyone again for all the hard work.

All the best,

Barb