

ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS.AUSTRALIAN PLANTS FOR CONTAINERS STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER NO. 8.

Winter in Wagga Wagga has been wet, cold and very dreary for both human and plant life. Two bright spots, however, have been *Correa* "Marian's Marvel" (*C. Backhousiana* x *reflexa*) which bloomed from March till early August and a Mother's Day Gift - *Epacris reclinata*, which is still covered with flowers. Both pots are visible from my kitchen window - spots of colour on miserable days. *Darwinia leostyla*, which bloomed so beautifully all last winter did not survive and *Eremophila maculata* is on the sick list suffering from an infestation of pink wax scale.

REPORTS:

Graeme Mee writes that he has had some success with double potting a *Boronia serrata*. He placed one pot inside another, the outside one being white. Stones and pebbles were placed between the two pots and gravel on the surface of the soil. The plant is surviving although it has twice been broken by a netball (losing its main stem) and once being knocked out of its pot completely.

A note from Pat Shaw reports the grafting of *Lechenaultia biloba*, *L. hirsuta* and *L. formosa* onto *Goodenia ovata*; and *Hibbertia stellaris* and *H. miniata* onto *H. scandens*. We will be interested to follow the progress of these plants.

Bill Watkins has lost his double potted *Lechenaultia biloba* but *L. formosa* is still doing well. He has purchased another orange and red *L. formosa* and *Dampiera diversifolia* and has placed them where they receive full sun. He has a problem with a huge maple growing in his neighbour's garden which restricts sunlight. Another casualty is *Crocea exalta* lost while in full bloom. Bill has been told that a graft onto *Correa alba* could be successful so he will try this as soon as he can obtain stocks of *C. alba*.

Bill advises that as Propagation Officer for the Parramatta-Castle Hill group he has purchased a large quantity of Nescofilm grafting tape which is the only tape which will split as the graft expands. This tape is hard to obtain at present but Bill would be happy to supply Study Group members with 1 metre x 1.00 cm (which is enough for 150 grafts) for \$1.00 plus a stamped, self addressed envelope. Bill's address is 8 Hiland Crescent, SMITHFIELD. N.S.W. 2164.

GRAFTING BANKSIAS.

I am indebted to Bill for the following extract from the Macquarie Uni. News 7.1986 which was reprinted in the Parramatta Castle Hill Newsletter in October, 1986:

"Our member and secretary, Keith Cairncross (Professor Keith Cairncross, Macquarie University) has done what the experts said was virtually impossible - grafted species of Australian west coast banksias to eastern rootstock. Usually W.A. species become infected with a root fungus *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, when grown in the east.

To date Keith has germinated some 50 species of W.A. banksias and grafted 20. Among the many factors contributing to the success was the pattern of the host and desired graft, and how closely related the transplant or scion was to the host. Once the feasibility of a graft was established, grafts were most successful when both plants

were coming into early seasonal growth. In WA this occurs in winter which is often cold and has a high rainfall. Eastern root-stock growth normally occurs in late winter-early spring. The disparity means that an artificial environment that synchronises the growth habits of both root stock and graft has to be created.

The actual graft is achieved by cutting a suitable shoot or twig from a Western plant and shaping a wedge some 2 cms long at the base (the total scion is about 6-7 cms long). The diameter of the wedge is measured and a part of the host plant with a branch or trunk of similar diameter is prepared to receive the graft. A diagonal cut is made to take the wedge, care being taken not to cut too deeply into the host. The graft is then bound in place with a waterproof elastic film. The plants are then lightly misted with water and placed in a glass house maintained at above 15°C. Optimum grafting conditions require a temperature of not more than 28°C in periods of relatively low humidity.

Also critical is the fastidious attention to hygiene. All instruments are washed in hypochloride or household bleach and rinsed in distilled water. The grafts were handled as little as possible during the grafting process and Keith wears surgical gloves to prevent sweat and bacteria interfering with the union. Apparently, his colleagues claim his skills with a scalpel also play a large part in his pioneering success.

Among the species successfully grafted in the past year are western *Banksia coccinea*, *baxteri*, *baueri*, *solandri*, *grandis*, *ashbyii*, *menzesii*, *audax*, *burdettii* and *speciosa*."

Biennial Conference time is fast approaching and with this in view I would like to hear from all active members so that Barbara Daly, our Study Group Co-ordinator will have available the necessary information for her report. What I would like to know is:-

1. Types of potting mix you are using - i.e. are you using a commercial potting mix or are you concocting your own special.
2. What fertilizer you use and do you think it is giving satisfactory results
3. What plants have you found most suitable for container growing

SUBSCRIPTIONS.

In accordance with regulations laid down at the last Biennial Conference all subscriptions were due on 1st July, 1987. The subscription is still \$3 and I would like to thank all those members who have already paid. Please indicate the branch of SGAP to which you belong. Membership of a Study Group is conditional on belonging to a SGAP Branch.

Best wishes for successful container gardening



MARGARET BARBOUR.