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ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS.

AUSTRALIAN PLANTS FOR CONTAINERS STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER NO. 9.

Summer started early in Wagga with temperatures in December up to 40°C - heat we usually experience in February. Heat and dry weather continued throughout the next three months without any let up and everything has suffered - not only container plants but well established garden plants died almost overnight in what has been described as one of our hottest, driest summers for over twenty years.

Losses which did surprise me were Prostanthera X Ballerina", Correa X "Marian's Marvel" and Calitris rhomboidea, all of which had been performing well under varying conditions for a number of years.

#### REPORTS.

A very interesting letter came from Thomas Ross and I quote from his letter:- Winter is approaching here - it is rainy and cold. We won't have much sun until next spring. In spite of having lots of work, I'll try to go to Spain on as many weekends as possible. A friend of mine bought a house with a garden over there, and it'll be my task to rejuvenate the garden, which is very beautiful. Many of the plants I grow in pots in Germany will be much happier in the open ground, I guess. The only problem will be the very calcareous subsoil and some salinity due to the proximity of the sea and the saltiness of tap water.

In the mean time I still have my greenhouses.....you ask for information about potting mixes, fertilizers and for the species most suitable for container growing. I use a mix of peat, sand and the granules of baked clay used for hydroponics. My trials with powdered lava and granules gave bad results, in the future I'll add a little of loam (slightly acid in our area) for the plants that like heavier soil. I mostly use a standard liquid fertilizer, but often at the time of repotting I include some horn meal. For the plants that want very good drainage, I simply increase the part of sand and clay granules in the compost. This gives good results.

My problems here are: 1. my negligence - I leave plants too long in too small containers. Some don't mind (the ones marked "Hardy" in the plant list), others mind a lot. 2. lack of sunshine in winter and overcrowded greenhouses. That means 100% humidity for 4 months, no sunshine at all in 2 or 3 greenhouses. See over for lists.

## LIST OF CONTAINER GROWN PLANTS

H = Hardy

ACACIA KYBEANENSIS very hardy and flowering as a small plant  
BOORMANII hardy  
DRUMMONDII flowering as a very small plant  
PRAVISSIMA hardy  
BARRINGTONENSIS  
PARADOXA flowering as a small plant, very hardy  
BROWNII flowering as a very small plant, hardy  
RETINODES flowering almost continuously, hardy  
CALAMIFOLIA  
BAILEYANA  
UNCINATA  
VERTICILLATA very hardy  
RICEANA hardy  
SUBULATA flowering as a very small plant  
FLORIBUNDA very hardy  
ANIGOZANTHUS FLAVIDUS  
BAECKEA VIRGATA very hardy  
BANKSIA MARGINATA very hardy  
OCCIDENTALIS  
BILLARDIERA VARIIFOLIA  
ERUBESCENS  
RINGENS hardy  
CALLISTEMON SUBULATUS very hardy  
CAPTAIN COOK  
SIEBERI  
PALLIDUS  
CASSIA PHYLLODINEA  
CHORIZEMA ILICIFOLIUM hardy and extremely showy in flower  
DIVERSIFOLIUM  
CLIANTHUS PUNICEUS hardy  
DACRYDIUM CUPRESSINUM  
DAVIDSONIA PRURIENS good house plant  
DENDROBIUM SPECIOSUM VAR COMPACTUM very hardy  
EUCALYPTUS CURTISII  
OBTUSIFLORA hardy and flowering as a small plant  
TORQUATA  
FOECUNDA  
LEUCOXYLON MACROCARPA VAR ROSEA  
FICIFOLIA  
EUCRYPHIA MILLIGANII  
EUGENIA WILSONII  
FICUS MACROPHYLLA very hardy, good house plant  
GREVILLEA THELEMANNIANA  
OLYMPIC FLAME hardy  
CLARET hardy  
VICTORIAE  
HAKEA MICROCARPA  
LISSOSPERMA hardy  
HIBBERTIA DENTATA hardy and free flowering  
SCANDENS hardy  
SERPYLLIFOLIA gracious little plant  
HYMENOSPORUM FLAVUM flowering as a small plant already  
ISOTOMA AXILLARIS  
JASMINUM SUAVISSIMUM  
KUNZEA MUELLERI hardy  
BAXTERI  
PARVIFOLIA  
LEPTOSPERMUM HUMIFUSUM

LEPTOSPERMUM CUNNINGHAMII hardy, nice silvery leaves and flowers  
 NITIDUM  
 RCTUNDIFOLIUM  
 LHOTZKYA ERICOIDES  
 MELALEUCA ERICIFOLIA very hardy  
 OLEARIA PHOGOPAPPA  
 PANDOREA PANDORANA hardy  
 JASMINOIDES  
 DORATOXYLON  
 PERSOONIA PINIFOLIA  
 PITTOSPORUM BICOLOR  
 UNDULATUM hardy and flowering as a small plant  
 POMADERRIS ELLIPTICA hardy  
 PROSTANTHERA BAXTERI  
 LASIANTHOS spectacular in flower  
 NIVEA VAR INDUTA  
 RCTUNDIFOLIA hardy and spectacular in flower  
 SIEBERI hardy and spectacular in flower  
 CUNEATA hardy  
 RHODODENDRON LOCHAE  
 SOLLYA HETEROPHYLLA long flowering season, hardy  
 STENOCARPUS SINUATUS  
 THYSANOTUS MULTIFLORUS

These are only the species I had a fair amount of success with.  
 The list of my failures is unfortunately much longer!

I guess summer is beginning in Australia - how I envy you.

Bill Watkins reports on a mild winter followed by a magnificent spring. One of Bill's problems at that stage was watering his container plants. With some he has found that dunking them once a week in a tub of water as well as top watering gives good results. I hope that the very wet summer that the N.S.W. coastal strip has experienced hasn't proved too much for your plants, Bill.

Bill also reports that the potting mix that gives the best results for him is 3 parts commercial mix (mostly pine bark, sawdust and white crushed quartz) to which he adds 2 parts compost, 2 parts friable loam and 2 parts more of crushed quartz (sometimes called Clarence sand or propagation sand which also used for cutting mix. Osmocote, trace elements and dolomite. During the growing season a foliar fertilizer is used.

The following is a list of plants that Bill has had growing in containers for from 3 to 7 years. Some of them, through lack of

attention have become straggly so cuttings have been taken, placed in 6" pots and most of them have flowered.

List of Plants which have been growing from 3 to 7 years in either 6" or 8" pots:

Asplenium australis (from spores.

Brachycom~~e~~ multidentata and B. break of Day.

Correa baeurlenii, C. reflexa, C. manni, C. pulchella.

Callistemon "Reeves Pink"

Callitris rhomboidea

Eremophila maculata, Red and yellow.

Eleocharis reticularis

Ericostemon myoporoides

Grevillea arenaria

Hoya australis

Melaleuca fulgens in purple, mauve and salmon; M. laterita

Kunzea ambigua

Myoporum viscosum, parvifolium

Prostanthera marifolia, violacea variegated, P.rotundifolia, P.nivea,  
P. nivea var induta

Thomasia macrocarpa, T. petalcalyx.

Westringia fruticosa Blue Heaven, W. Wynyabbie gem

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Bill has a large number of epiphytic and terrestrial orchids and he has found that the epiphytes do better when placed in a mix of casuarina bark, charcoal, coarse gravel and peatmoss, rather than on bark slabs. One Dendrobium kingianum has been in a container (15cm x 60 cm) for over 12 years and it produces over 200 spikes each year.

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Over the past twelve months my commitments have increased to such an extent that I have reluctantly decided that I can no longer continue as Study Leader after the 30th June. I would like to hear from anyone who would be interested in taking over so that I can inform Barbara Daly, Study Group Co-ordinator.

Best wishes for successful container gardening,

*Margaret Barbour*

MARGARET BARBOUR.