

S.G.A.P. ACACIA STUDY GROUP
NEWSLETTER NO. 17
SEPTEMBER 1974

Mrs I B Armitage
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With great personal sadness I report the death of Lycia Maloney who was killed with tragic suddenness during a violent storm towards the end of May, when a large tree crashed down on their cottage. No one could have had greater love for our native flora than Lycia, who worked alongside her husband Phil, in their native plant nursery.

We have four new members:

Mr Brian Lacy	106 Pitt Street, Eltham, Vic 3095
Mr N R Marriott	120 Fortescue Avenue, Seaford, Vic 3201
Mr J N Parker	Forestry Commission of Tasmania, Forest Nursery, Perth, Tasmania 7300
Mrs R White	6 Cooloon Court, Maniana, WA 6107

RESPONSE FROM MEMBERS TO GROUP ACTIVITIES

As you know, I have been trying without success, to find someone to take over the Study Group.

After the response to my last request for "homework" I am even more anxious to relinquish the job, as it is quite evident that about 80% of members are quite prepared to contribute nothing. Of 53 Report Sheets sent out only 18 were returned. Several of these lacked vital information such as rainfall, temperatures and amount of sun; others did not tally with Reports sent in 2½ years ago; others have no comment whatsoever as to condition of plant, and still others carry the words "same as before". As members have only one sheet to fill in I would have thought they could find time and energy to fill in these details instead of leaving it to me to check back on previous reports. Well, the time has come to ask for another \$1 and with everything going on so rapidly I don't know how long this will last. But I ask you please NOT to renew your membership unless you are prepared to keep elementary records ie date and number of seeds sown; number germinated; date and number planted out; and after that to record when any die and to be adequately prepared to complete Report Sheets as and when requested.

In future, no seeds will be supplied to members whose Report Sheets are outstanding. You will remember in last N/L I asked for results of seed sowing even if no plants surviving. Members whose subscriptions are not received by December 31st will be deemed to have relinquished membership.

FINANCE

Balance as at date of N/L No. 15		\$57.30
Add:	Subs and donations	<u>\$23.00</u>
		\$80.30
Less:	Seed List and Members List Jan 1974	\$12.76
	Seed from Kings Park	\$3.90
	Postage N/Ls 15 & 16, new members etc	\$12.83
	1600 Seed Envelopes	\$9.50
	Foolscap Envelopes (2 N/Ls)	<u>\$0.85</u>
		<u>\$39.84</u>
		\$40.46

\$40.46 may sound like a reasonable balance, but of this \$25 represents subs paid in advance; expenses for this N/L have not yet been debited and in the near future I will be paying out for seeds from Kings Park and for our new seed list and members' list for distribution in January.

NEWS FROM MEMBERS

Russell Costin and his wife now have a Native Plant Nursery in Norman Park, a suburb of Brisbane.

Mrs Simmons, in reply to my comments on *A. botrycephala* N/L No. 16 says that in Tasmania the pale yellow and deep gold grow side by side and are equally common. Mrs Simmons also reports that a new species has recently been found in Tasmania in the foothills area of the Ben Lomond Range, SE of Launceston. It has been described and named *A. pataczekii* after a botanical officer of the Tasmanian Forestry Commission who first recognized it as a new species.

SEED LIST

Additions

A. brevifolia
A. cuthbertsonii
A. drewiana
A. dunnii
A. platycarpa
A. semirigida
A. trinervata

Deletions

A. aulacocarpa
A. bidentata
A. biflora
A. calyculata
A. megacephala
A. pentadenia
A. sedifolia
A. steedmanii
A. tetragonophylla

Seeds of a number of fairly common types are running out, so please make a point of collecting this season. To save you the trouble of collecting unnecessarily, if you send me a list of what you could collect I will let you know whether it is required by the Bank. The following are amongst those required: *A. brunioides*, *A. cultriformis*, *A. floribunda*, *A. decora*, *A. lanuginosa*, *A. lineata*, *A. pubescens*, *A. triptera*.

DATA FROM REPORT SHEETS

A. acinacea. This species seems to keep to about 1.5 metres in height and all members growing in clay based soils report it to be a reliable satisfactory garden shrub. Those growing in light sandy soils all report poor spindly growth. So we seem to have sorted this one out!

A. aculeatissima. Both forms, prostrate and upright, undoubtedly prefer clay soils. Note from Trevor Blake:- "reasonably common in Melbourne's E and NE suburbs, usually on grassy slopes in gravelly clay soils where it receives some moisture although having good drainage. This was in reply to Mrs Schotte's observation that her "prostrate" type was growing upwards. Some time ago Ross Macdonald reported that *A. aculeatissima* occurs naturally with the prostrate form and shrub form freely intermingled, so of course it is not surprising that the seed does not come true to form.

A. amblygona. Remarks for shrub and prostrate forms apply as for preceding, but we have less knowledge of the type of soil required by this species. David Hanger reports that the upright form grows naturally about 20 miles west of Brisbane on hard, stony, dry, gravelly ridges. With all the rain Brisbane has had this winter he has had no success with either form. I understand the prostrate form is being successfully grown by Austriflora Nursery in Victoria.

A. browniana. This is a treasure being grown only by Mr Lacey and me. Both are 2½ years old from seed and have just flowered. A dainty little plant from WA with bipinnate foliage and large deep gold flower heads on long peduncles.

A. brownii. Reports indicate that this normally will not exceed 1.5m in height and most growers report that it is easy and successful. Mr Althofer at Burrendong Arboretum had one which died in the "big wet" 10 years old and still only 1.5m.

A. buxifolia. No definite pattern here. Can reach 2m height. Many failures. Success mostly in Victoria. Think this also prefers heavy soils.

A. colletioides. No member has ever claimed success with this.

A. complanata. Interesting comment from David Hanger:- "Plants growing naturally on site when I arrived. I kept bushfires out for 5 years. Plants lost vigour and didn't flower well. About Feb/Mar 1973 I pruned all plants back to 15 cm immediately after heavy rain. Since then regrowth has been very dense and vigorous. No plants died when pruned severely. They have been trying to flower ever since, but exceptionally heavy summer rains have hindered flowering. Severe pruning was meant to simulate bushfires." This is a beautiful shrub and should be tried by everyone.

A. continua. Not easy but 3 members have it growing well – again in clay.

A. cuneata. 6 members have this growing well, four in clay soil, which is surprising, because in WA it grows in sand, sometimes right on the sand dunes. Over there it stays around 45cm height but some Victorian members report heights up to 1.5m and straggly instead of compact growth.

A. decora. This again is not easy and reports vary to such an extent that it is difficult to make any useful comments.

A. drummondii. I'd call this one temperamental. It sometimes does well under the most unlikely conditions and fails where it should do well. Easy to germinate and fast growing, usually flowers at 18 months. I've had about 50 of these over the past 8 years. There would be about 18 or so in the garden now, of which three are eight years old. There are at least three varieties. What I call the "ordinary" one grows here to 2m, has brilliant yellow spikes about 1cm wide by 3½ long and rather pointed pinnules. *A. drummondii* var. *major* I have just flowered for the first time. Flower spike is fatter and slightly shorter, a beautiful rich pale yellow; pinnules darker, broader and rounded at the ends. I don't know whether this also comes in the darker yellow. And Trevor Blake reports on one grown generally in Melbourne suburbs which he describes as follows:- "Only .5m high with a soft feathery foliage is far superior to the upright form." Has anyone in Victoria seed of this?

A. enterocarpa. Insufficient information for comment. 3 growers all different opinions.

A. flexifolia. Apologies for listing this in N/L 16 as "*flexilis*". Four out of 5 growers report good growth, but again seems to do better on heavier soils. Burrendong has one 10 years old 2m x 2.5m

A. genistifolia. All 4 members growing this report favourably but 3 of the 4 are growing in their natural areas. Mrs Simmons reports that the Tasmanian variety has bright yellow flowers unlike those in NSW which are paler. It also has wider phyllodes up to 3mm. There is some seed of this in the seed bank. Mrs Statham reports a prostrate form from South Arm 20 miles SE of Hobart. When she wrote in February, her plants were 12 months old from seed and only 5cm high. Mrs Statham sent seed of this, but I have mislaid it for the moment.

A. gilbertii. Difficult but worth persevering with. Small bipinnate foliage, not unlike *A. drummondii* but will ball flower.

A. glandulicarpa. This would seem to be the most adaptable and satisfactory of the small acacias so far grown by a number of people. Ages include plants up to 6½ years old and only one is more than 1m in height. The shrub has a small compact growth, phyllodes ovate about 15mm long with a wavy margin and an excellent florescence deep yellow.

A. glaucoptera. I regard this also as somewhat temperamental. Messrs Lacey, Jacobs and Blake all report plants growing well, Melbourne soil again; and Ross Macdonald says:- "It is fairly widely grown in Melbourne and available from nurseries. I have seen it growing in built up sand at Mt Martha (Port Phillip Bay) and doing equally well there. In Melbourne's eastern suburbs it does very nicely thank you – clay soil of course."

A. gunnii. Very difficult. No reports of success. Ross Macdonald thinks it needs a lot of shade and summer moisture.

A. lanigera. Four Victorian growers successful. No success other states. If one gets a good variety of this it can be spectacular.

A. lineata. This is one which should be tried by more members. Reports indicate that it could be fairly easy and rewarding. Does attain 2m height though. Graeme Lees says that his has a slightly weeping habit but could be due to tip pruning having altered its natural appearance.

A. mitchellii. This another for the Victorians, five of whom report satisfactory growing. Mr Currie and Mr Lacey already have plants 2m high, in full sun. Ross Macdonald says:- "Under-shrub, shade, always needs pruning." Sounds as though it does better in full sun.

Many of the species for which reports were requested are being grown by none, one or two members and are generally very young, so there's no point in mentioning them yet. Others listed will be dealt with in January N/L.

As with 1971 reports it is quite evident that Victorians have by far the most suitable growing conditions. Especially successful are Ross Macdonald, Vic Jacobs, Ern Currie (nurseryman), Alan Lacey; and in NSW Mrs Schotte, and in SA Mrs Harvey,

Many thanks to those who did their homework.

Bye for now,
Inez Armitage