

S.G.A.P. ACACIA STUDY GROUP

NEWSLETTER NO. 28 AUGUST, 1979

Almost a year has gone since Acacia Study Group was revived and membership now stands at sixty-five, seven of whom are passive members. Welcome to these new members and thank you for your subscriptions:

Toohy Mtn. Project, Leader J.Hampson, 51 Althea St.Salisbury,Qd. 4107
Mr. A. Finch, 8 Lowanna St., Kenmore, Qd. 4069
Dr. M. McDowall, 10 Russell St., Bulleen, Vic. 3105
Mr. & Mrs. F.D. Graham, 21 Barrenjoey Rd., Ettalong Beach, N.S.W. 2257
Mrs. J.A. Cowlshaw, 139 Middleharbour Rd., East Lindfield, N.S.W. 2070
Mr. M.E. Holmes, 11 Goldsworth Rd., Ethelton, S.A. 5015
Mr. J. Topp, Lot 58 Cranbourne Rd., Cranbourne, Vic. 3977
Mr. J.L. Yuille, 41 Hampstead Drive, Werribee, Vic. 3030
S.G.A.P. Qld. Region, P.O. Box 809, Fortitude Valley, Qd. 4006
Mr. T. McCall, 129 Main St., Cressy, Tas. 7302
Mrs. R. Schipp, Sturt Highway, Wagga Wagga, N.S.W. 2650

and to Mrs. Joy Cook and son, Russell, 2 Warwick St. Largs North, S.A. 5016 who have rejoined the group.

A correction to Gary Phillip's address. It is now P.O. Box 199, Ravensthorpe, W.A. 6346.

FINANCIAL REPORT TO 31st JULY, 1979

Cash received from previous leader	39.16	
Subscriptions and donations	104.00	
		<hr/>
		143.16
<u>Expenses</u>		
Stationery etc.	46.73	
Stamp Duty etc. on cheques	5.03	
Postage (incl. Aug. n/letter)	66.46	
Purchase of seeds	20.60	
		<hr/>
		138.82
		4.34
Subs. received in advance		<hr/>
		31.00
		<hr/>
Balance in bank		35.34

Subscriptions are now due for all members except for those who have joined since April/May. Please note that the sub. is to remain at \$2.00 a year. Thanks to those members who have sent in their subs. already. It is appreciated.

Those people who have not renewed by the December newsletter will be considered no longer interested.

I have been receiving \$1.00 from new members because of an error in "Australian Plants". I have written to correct this, but it will take some time to filter through.

SEED BANK

Thank you to members who have forwarded seed for the seed bank. We have received some really interesting new species to try. Members who have contributed seed are:-

Mrs. B. Chandler	Mr. G. Phillips
Mrs. I. Armitage	Mr. J. Lee
Mrs. J. Dark	Mr. R. Priddle
Mrs. P. Holmes	Manjimup Natural History Club, W.A.

We have sent out over 660 packets of seed to 31st July. A new seed list is included; please destroy the old one. No seed will be available from the middle of August until the middle of October

I will be going to the S.G.A.P. Conference/Seminar in Sydney in August and to the Study Group Leaders' meeting which will be held at the same venue on 25th August. I would be happy to hear of any matter relative to study groups which you think should be discussed at the meeting. The remainder of the time away will be spent travelling in N.W.A.

We have received exchange newsletters from the Eucalypt Study Group and from the Victorian Region. Thank you.

In each newsletter I plan to bring to your notice an interesting native plant area which I consider worth visiting should you be in the vicinity.

Burrendong Arboretum was mentioned some years ago, but I feel it is time to mention it again.

The Arboretum is situated near Burrendong Dam a few miles from Wellington, near Dubbo in N.S.W. Mr. George Althofer's name will always be associated with Burrendong as the initiator of the whole marvellous idea. It covers approximately 162 ha (395ac) and has been under development for 13/14 years. It was developed originally to preserve those plants in danger of extinction from clearing, and now is aiming to grow as many as possible of our beautiful native plants. There one can see an immense variety of plants now in excess of 30,000 plants of more than 1600 species from all states - from the tiniest prostrate plants to the largest forest trees.

All visitors are welcome and it is a memorable experience to walk the paths and see the results of the efforts of a small group of dedicated people. If you wish to support this valuable project:-

Ordinary membership (including "Brigge")	\$3.50 per year
Associate " (excluding "Brigge")	2.00 " "
Junior, under 12 " (including "Brigge")	1.50 " "
Life Membership (including "Brigge")	40.00

"Brigge" is the Arboretum's quarterly publication.

Send to: Hon. Treasurer, Burrendong Arboretum Association,
"Noonee-Nyrang", Gulgong Rd.,
WELLINGTON....N.S.W. 2820

PROBLEMS:

One member has found that after pouring boiling water over seed and soaking for 24 hours as recommended, that only a proportion of the seed is swelling. After re-treatment a few more are swelling, and so on. This means that instead of one tray or pot of seed, he is ending up with a lot of pots of one species all germinating at different times. Any suggestions for a remedy, still using the soaking method?

A member has asked if anyone has any tips for treatment of material to help keep flowers and phyllodes in place on herbarium sheets.

Another member has A. gracilifolia growing and flowering quite well, but it seems to be very susceptible to attack by tiny caterpillars in early Spring. The attack is so severe that the plant can be denuded and dead if it is not spotted early. Garlic spray is to be tried this spring. Has anyone else had this problem and if so, what is their remedy? We have no problems with A. gracilifolia in our garden.

Further information on A. truncata and A. littorea extracted from "Nuytsia" Vol.2 No. 5, 1978.

A. littorea Maslin

synonyms A. decipiens (C.Koen) R.Br. var. trapezoides DC
A. " " " var. praemorsa R.Graham

A. dolabriformis Colla

A. connata Benth. var glabra Meisn (in part; as to Rottneest Island)

Grows on coastal dunes in deep well-drained sand from Forest Beach (between Bunbury

and Busselton) to Bremer Bay (160km NE of Albany) Also occurs on Rottnest Island. It does not grow on limestone like its relative A. truncata. Flowers between August and November.

In the past the name A. decipiens (Koen) R.Br. has been applied to this species. However, in this paper A. decipiens has been treated as a nomenclatural synonym of A. truncata.

A. littorea can be distinguished from A. truncata by its deciduous stipules, but there are also differences in the phyllodes, seeds, distribution and flowering times.

Acacia truncata (Burm.f.) Hort ex Hoffmannsegg.

Synonyms: A. decipiens C. Koen is an illegitimate name.
A. cuneata Benth var. glabra Meisn (in part)

Grows in coastal regions and almost entirely restricted to areas of shallow sand over limestone from North of Bunbury to Leeman (250km N of Perth). Flowers between June and September.

A. truncata has generally been known as A. cuneata, but this well known name must go into synonymy.

The stipules are persistent on most mature branchlets in A. truncata but absent in A. littorea (present only on very young new shoots). There are times when this is not always consistent and several variants have been recorded.

It is possible that A. truncata was one of the first two plants ever collected by Europeans in Australia, although it was originally collected as a fern.

PROPAGATION BY CUTTINGS

Very few members appear to be propagating Acacias by the cutting method. We are assured by our more experienced members that this method is as easy and successful as with any other genera. It means that we have the opportunity to choose the best possible forms for propagation. Ross Macdonald's offer of cuttings is still open.

An article in Canberra Region Newsletter Vol.4 No.1 July, 1978 by A.D. Chapman is relevant. On looking back into old British gardening literature, he found that although many Acacias grown in Britain during the 19th century were not Australian species and some of what is said may not apply wholly to the Australian species, all the phyllodinous species are Australian, and many of these were grown in Britain during this period.

"According to Robert Sweet, a well known British gardener in the 1820's and 1830's all species of Acacia are easy to cultivate. He recommends that those grown in pots should be grown in a mixture of loam and peat. "Cuttings" he says, "of most kinds will strike root. From the strongest growing kinds, take off large cuttings at a joint, and plunge them in a pot of sand under a hand-glass in the bark bed". (A bark bed was an ingenious method, used in pre-electricity days, of supplying bottom heat, and a method which was used extensively in Britain in the 1830's.) Sweet goes on to say that the smaller species can also be grown by this method. However younger cuttings are taken, and also placed in heat.

Sweet continues by saying that "the sooner the plants are potted off after they are rooted the better. If they stay too long, the sand injures the roots: they should be kept under a dome glass, and shaded for a few days after potting off, and exposed to the air by degrees".

Cuttings of most kinds, Sweet observes, will root freely, taken off in the young wood and planted in sand under a bell-glass with a little bottom heat. The kinds

that do not root readily from cuttings may be increased by taking off roots, as large pieces as can be spared, and planting them in the same kind of soil as the parent plants, and then placing them under a hand-glass in a little bottom heat. George Don, another English gardener of the period, adds that one should leave only the points of the roots above the surface when propagating by this means. Both authors agree that most species of *Acacia* can be propagated by this method."

I hope that some of our active members will be interested to try these old time methods, and see what can be done today.

MORE PROPAGATING TECHNIQUES:

I have received a copy of Central Highlands Vic. Newsletter from Bill Owen which outlines the method used by Mr. Ivan Tiley of Bulngherin Station.

He advocates the propagation of native seeds for all species in an open sandbox as it seems to be a nearly natural way of producing plants. He considers the time of planting very important and from results has come to the conclusion that the best month for planting is February (in his area). Although there can be no hard and fast rules, he feels that most spring flowering plants would be shedding mature seeds by February.

February plantings will produce seedlings ready to be pricked off by the middle or end of May. Cooler conditions then give a greater survival rate. Plants make only minimal growth in winter, but root systems are established. Many species are then large enough for planting out by the following autumn.

The seed box 10cm x 5cm (4"x2") or 10cm x 7.5cm (4"x3") timber is used for edging, allowing 9cm (3½") depth of soil at least.

Soil: mixture of good quality loam, leaf mould and washed sand, blended roughly 3-1-1; pressed firmly into the frame to about 12cm (½") from top. The top of the soil should be level. Some of the soil mix sifted and used thinly just under and as a fine cover over the seeds, lightly press with flat board.

Acacia seed is treated by soaking in boiling water for half an hour, dried off quickly then sown.

Watering requires great care. A high pressure mist spray, Rega 052, is directed upwards over bed, allowing a fine mist to fall gently. Twice daily watering is necessary in February, preferably morning and evening. Watering is reduced as weather cools and seeds germinate.

The only precautions taken by Mr. Tiley are some sort of cover, plastic or galv.iron to guard against heavy rain or an early frost. Slug and snail killer must be used.

MEMBERS' NOTES:

Ern Currie has *A. gibberdingensis* growing on a clay bank, which is rather dry in summer and *A. lasiocalyx*, too, but reports that both are rather open and straggly. Both plants are about 6 years old. Ern has some young plants flowering or about to for the first time. These include *A. denticulosa*, *A. hakeoides*, *A. havilandii*, *A. triptera* and *A. venulosa*.

Trevor Blake would like to add to our list of those species which are susceptible to overwatering:- *A. amblygona prostrata* and *A. conferta*neither were appreciative of cold, wet winters in Melbourne.

A. amblygona prostrata was growing in two places both with good drainage in heavy, grey clay soils. One has thrived in a sunny, open position facing North, the other received much less sun in a South-Easterly position; it was eventually shaded out and died.

A. conferta was in one of the best drained places in a NW position. During the warmer months it thrived, but winter caused branches to die back and grey mould

appeared and in the sixth season it died. Here again shading out by other plants probably helped its departure.

New member, Dr. Max McDowell mentions that of the established wattles in his garden A. jibberdingensis earns its place. It is a shrub 3.5 x 3.5m planted in a deep raised bed of 50% sand, 25% clay loam and 25% sandy loam.

We have seed in the seed bank of this species. It is a very floriferous erect shrub 3-4m tall from W.A., with long phyllodes, 11-17cm long x 2mm broad and deep yellow spike flowers.

Another beautiful shrub which I would like to recommend to you is A. imbricata from Eyre Peninsula in S.A. It is a many branched shrub of about 3m x 3m with small bright green crowded, stem clasping phyllodes 10-12cm x 1mm with a gland at the tip, and masses of the brightest gold ball flowers. It is considered to be related to A. lineata.

We have two plants in our garden, at present an impressive, perfumed, massed display of gold. They are growing in a dry, sunny position, but must be subject to some of our heavy frosts.

There are seeds of this one in the seed bank, too.

This may be of interest to those members who receive copies of "Austrobaileya" and "Myrtisia". Trevor Blake has prepared a valuable separate index for "Austrobaileya" Vol 1 No. 2 and for "Myrtisia" Vols. 1 and 2 to facilitate their use. Each index comprises three pages. Should anyone like to receive a copy of either index, we would forward them upon receipt of a 9 x 4 stamped addressed envelope and 10c in stamps for each index required.

BORERS IN ACACIAS

Several methods of control have been put forward as effective. Regular inspection is needed to observe a hole in the bark surrounded by wood dust.

From N.S.W. newsletter Vol.13:3 One method was to clean off the sawdust or webby coating, and seal the hole with plastic wood. The poisonous fumes suffocate the borer.

Another method was to insert a few drops of insecticide, like Mortein, by dropper into the hole. This soon brings results.

So far our winter in Tasmania has been very mild with only a few heavy frosts, with temperatures down to -3°C. This has encouraged early flowering by the Acacias in particular, in some cases up to 4 to 6 weeks early. The garden has been an increasing display of gold since early June.

Wishing you all successful growing in the coming season.

Regards,

Marion Simmons