

ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS  
ACACIA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER NO. 54  
JULY 1988

Dear Members,

Tasmania has had the warmest June on record - we could hardly believe it!

It has rained a lot and the ground is very wet and soggy now and we have had a few very cold mornings with quite heavy frosts. The first flowers appeared on our Acacia neriiifolia in June, much earlier than usual, some A. baileyanas are in full flower and other species are now starting to bloom; some at least a month or so earlier than usual.

NEW MEMBERS - A warm welcome to our new members:  
 Mrs Norma Ali, 10 O'Connor Court, Sandy Bay 7005  
 Greg Mealmaster, C/- Larundel Hospital, Bundoora 3083  
 Jeff Irons, Stonecourt, 74 Brimstage Rd. Heswall L60 IXQ,  
 England

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

Mr. R.W.Cooper, 20 Esplanade, Wynyard 7325.

Thank you for the subscriptions and donations received since March. Please note that ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE AT 30 JUNE unless recently paid. A red cross in the righthand corner of your newsletter indicates that your subs. are now due.

I would like to acknowledge receipt of newsletters from the Daisy, Dodonaea, Aust. Plants for Containers, Birds & Native Plants Study Groups and regional newsletters from Victoria, Tasmania and Queensland only; newsletters from the other regions would be appreciated.

NATIONAL FLORAL EMBLEM

The movement to have Acacia pycnantha proclaimed as Australia's official floral emblem has gained momentum. To support the proclamation of A. pycnantha, a letter was written to the Minister for Home Affairs on the Study Group's behalf suggesting that the bicentennial year would be an appropriate time for its proclamation. The Minister's reply in part is as follows: "The Group's interest in the official recognition of national symbols is appreciated. I would like to inform you that the proposal for a national floral emblem will be considered with a number of other national symbols issues. However no timetable has yet been set regarding this matter". (A rather negative sort of reply I would say!)

WATTLE DAY. We have received a letter from Mrs. Jean McCall dated 16 June in which she mentioned the matter of the proclamation of our floral emblem and that her efforts had received much the same response as ours.

She mentioned that she is setting up a wattle Day stall again this year at the (NSW) SGAP Annual Wildflower Show in September and is asking for any assistance we can give. She would like either some interested member to offer help in the

way of relevant information, donations of seeds or suggestions on how to promote the Wattle.

I will send her a donation of seeds on your behalf.

Mrs. McCall mentioned that in NSW Wattle Day is celebrated on August 1 and she will, as usual, do what she can to draw attention to the significance of the day. As well as activities such as handing sprigs to children at local schools and posies to shoppers, she is also hoping to organise sprigs to be handed to commuters at local railway stations.

Should any Study Group member feel that they are able to help Mrs. McCall in any way, would they please contact her at 4 Bathurst Street, Gympie 2227 ?

#### MEMBERS NOTES

Irene Champion from Slade Point Qld has written about A. simsii. One shrub in particular at the local school was measured, it was 4m high, had a spread of 5.80m and a trunk diameter of about 13cm. This plant was propagated from seeds from Ball Bay, a beach resort just north of Mackay and it was planted at the school in August 1981 in a well prepared garden bed. The plant grew very quickly and flowered about a year after planting. Flowers were bright yellow and lightly perfumed and flowering consisted of a series of flushes from September through to about March with some as close as 2 weeks apart so by the time the flowering season was over, the shrub was literally covered with seed pods. A number of pods developed for each globular head and with new buds developing it was impossible to remove pods from the previous flowering without sacrificing further flowerings. The first two seasons' flowerings were very heavy but less flowers were produced in subsequent seasons. This extraordinary shrub, with other plants, has now made way for a covered play area! A. simsii is mostly a spindly, single-stemmed shrub to about 2m high.

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Bruce Clarke from Panmure, Vic. has found from experience that in farm planting access for machinery must be given consideration (see N/n November '87). He mentioned that when he took his tractor-mounted slasher into one of his long plantations he had to back out of one row because it was too narrow between trees. He felt that in a farm situation this access was quite important as plantations which cannot be grazed become a harbour for weeds and if near buildings, a fire hazard, unless they are mown or slashed.

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Frank Berner of Mt. Eliza, Vic. has reported that he has had little success with some of the smaller Acacia species. Those he mentioned included A. blakelyi, browniana and vars., crassuloides, drummondii ssp elegans, gordonii, merrallii, multispicata and varia var parvifolia. Some others which have flowered and still live he mentioned A. cometes and sclerophylla (two vars). Of the older smaller plants which are doing well, Frank listed A. glandulicarpa, glaucoptera, lanigera, lanuginosa and rigens.

Frank has been using a Debco soilless mix for two years and has decided that some of the Acacias do not do well in it. Now

he is adding more coarse river sand to the mix and his results seem to be far better. Anyone else had experiences like this ?

Leon Steinhardt of Laidley, Qld. wrote that he is very pleased with how his Acacias have handled first the drought conditions and then much rain. He did not lose one established plant. He mentioned that A. uncifera flowered for the first time this year. (This is a beautiful species).

Leon mentioned that the following Acacias sucker freely at his place: A. salicina, concurrans and aulacocarpa. The latter is a tree over 10 m tall with 'roots' for miles'. Leon has about 11 rare and endangered species growing now and that is good to hear.

Thomas Ross from West Germany wrote that A. echinula flowered profusely this year and A. ulicifolia var brownei turned out to be the pale flowered A. ulicifolia. A. cardiophylla grows well in pots and his plant had a few flowers. A. pulchella var glaberrima which is 4-5 years old has never flowered, so he planted it out into the warmer Spanish garden which he mentioned before.

Thomas mentioned that last winter with temperatures down to -8° c, A. amoena, pravissima, riceana and kettlewelliae suffered varying degrees of frost damage.

#### EXTRACTS FROM ACIAR FORESTRY NEWSLETTER NO. 5 February 1988:

TANNIN RESEARCH IN CHINA - ACIAR, in conjunction with the Chinese authorities, is working on a project which aims to improve the quality and quantity of tannin extracts produced in China for tanning of leather and the production of waterproof tannin formaldehyde adhesives.

The focus of the research is Acacia mearnsii (Black Wattle). "The bark of this species gives high yields (30-50%) of very good quality tannin and is the basis of tannin industries in Brazil, Kenya, India, South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe."

Research has been based on widely selected collections of seed made from the natural range of A. mearnsii in Australia and these provenances were planted in trials in China in 1986 and 1987.

Bark samples from 22 provenances were collected from NSW, Vic., S.A. and Tas. and analysis has confirmed that some of the new introductions have the potential to produce high tannin yielding bark. After three year's trials an extensive genetic resource and tannin purification technology will be available as a basis for production that will meet the Chinese demand for quality tannin.

#### PROVENANCE COLLECTIONS OF A. AURICULIFORMIS

Tropical A. auriculiformis has often been described as a small multi-stemmed or crooked tree and no doubt it does grow this way in some areas. However, the results of seed collections in late 1987 have revealed some new populations of the species in N.T. and western provinces of Papua New Guinea which were taken from straight trees of excellent form up to 30 m tall. Plants grown from this seed ultimately will be used in trials

at selected sites in Asia and Africa.

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We noted with interest that some of the Acacias used on the Brisbane Expo site were A. baileyana, fimbriata, macradenia, podalyriifolia and spectabilis. It will be interesting at the end of Expo to hear how they fared .  
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Please note that John and I will be away on an Acacia hunting trip from 18 August until 11 September, so if seeds are required would you please send in your requests in plenty of time.

Marion Simmons  
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LEGANA 7277

MR. B. CLARK