

Dear Members

Most of the Acacias in our garden have finished flowering with the exception of A. retinodes, rupicola and obliquinervia but it has been a particularly good flowering season.

MEMBERSHIP - Thank you for subscriptions and donations received from members and Regions. A specially generous donation of \$25.00 has been received from NSW Region for which we thank them.

My thanks also to the Regions and Study Groups who have forwarded their latest newsletters. We always find them of great interest.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to new members who have joined us since July. Names are included in the accompanying updated member's list.

SEED BANK

A new edition of our seed list is enclosed. I would welcome requests for seeds as we have a wonderful variety of Acacias which may be grown with little effort or prior experience. Many of the species are suited to growing in smaller gardens as well as larger areas.

While on our recent trip along the mainland East Coast and mountains we were introduced to several Acacias which we had not seen before. Among them were A. dorothea and A. hamiltoniana, both very beautiful. I have decided to grow them here and feel they should be successful as they occur in the Blue Mountains.

GROWING ACACIAS FROM SEED.

On the whole Acacia seed needs some pre-treatment before sowing to ensure quick germination. There are several basic methods with variations which can be tried.

One method used by Inez Armitage is to nick larger seeds with a razor blade and then place them on one sheet of fine sandpaper and rub the seeds with another piece. Small seeds are sandpapered without first nicking them.

Seeds are then placed in a container and near boiling water is poured over them. When seeds swell they are ready for sowing. Those which have not swollen in 2/3 days are removed from the water and allowed to dry and are then sandpapered or nicked again. They are all given the water treatment again and are sown.

If only a few seeds are to be sown, here is another simple method. Use a long sharp darning needle, hold the seed firmly under a finger on a plate of some sort and make a break in the top of the seed-case opposite the seedstalk. Sow the seed in a well-drained gravelly mix and place the tray or pot in a 'glasshouse' or under plastic or glass.

In either case, usually in a few days the Acacia seedlings start to appear and as soon as they are strong enough pot them on into small pots (70 mm is ideal). Use a well-drained soil mix comprising gravel or coarse sand, mulched pine bark and a little loam. There are other mixes which you may like to try. Whatever you use test the mix to make sure that the water drains through the pot quickly and if it tends to linger too long, add more gravel to the mix.

MEMBERS' NOTES

Max McDowall of Melbourne has written of the failure of A. chinchillensis which died at two years before flowering. He tried two plantings; one site had heavy wet subsoil and the other was a well-drained scoria mix; both were in semi-shade. Max feels that this plant would do better in full sun. I agree with him. We are growing it here in a dry position with little shade. The shrub is about 1 m x 1.5m and has flowered reasonably well for so far south.

Angus Emmott wrote offering to send us a report on the progress of the Acacias in the ACIAR trials being held on his property at Longreach. I feel sure that this would be of great interest to us all.

Frank Prichard of Lockhart NSW has sent a comprehensive report on the wonderful range of Acacias growing at the Galore Hill Reserve. There are 224 plants in the Acacia plantation of 96 varieties. In the general plantation there are another 396 plants making 620 Acacia plants of 130 varieties. This must have provided a wonderful sight in spring and is a great credit to Frank. He told me that he has over 50 other Acacia plants in pots waiting to be planted out in autumn.

SEED VIABILITY is a subject that comes up for discussion on a regular basis and is of the utmost importance. It is known that some Acacia seeds like A. harpophylla (Brigalow), A. cambagei, A. georginae and A. peuce which will germinate without pre-treatment generally do not remain viable for more than a few months. However, many others appear to remain viable for many years. We hear stories of Acacias re-appearing in areas where they have not been seen for up to 50 years. The seed must have been buried and after being dug up have germinated. Little information appears to be available on just how long any specific species remains viable and at what rate viability decreases.

One of our members has suggested that it would be beneficial for us to conduct germination trials to see if we could further increase our knowledge. Would you be prepared to volunteer to trial say six species of 10 seeds of each?

This would mean sowing all the seeds at one time using your usual method of germination. It would be necessary to note the date of sowing, the number of seeds sown and germinated, date of germination, then report the results to me.

Please let me know if you are willing to take part in the trial and I will forward seeds to try in autumn. Perhaps we could follow up with another trial in spring next year.

If you are concerned with how to dispose of the resultant seedlings, perhaps you could consider passing them on to a SGAP plant group to grow on for a wildflower show or donating them to a local school.

ACACIA PROJECT - Acacia article for 'Australian Plants'. I have begun the task of collating some of the reports which have been forwarded. I would, however, appreciate more response from members. Full details are in March newsletter 1990.

NEW SPECIES AND NAME CHANGES - Contd. Extracted from a paper on Acacia published in WA Herbarium's Nuytsia Vol 7 (2) 1990 by R S Cowan and B R Maslin.

The following new species are members of the 'Acacia multilineata' group and have persistent stipules, the main longitudinal nerves as well as usually the lesser nerves are clearly defined and raised.

Acacia caesariata - from Bunulla-Kununoppin area. Dense shrub to 1.3 m tall. New growth white-tomentose. Phyllodes leathery narrow oblong-oblongate 2-4.5 cm x 3-10 mm with 1-3 main nerves. Flowers small, dark lemon-yellow balls in spring.

Acacia mimica - Widespread dense rounded shrubs 0.3-2.5 m tall. Phyllodes leathery, flat, variable, 2-10 cm x 2-7 mm, usually incurved. Light to mid yellow ball flowers.

var mimica - phyllodes narrow elliptic to +- oblong mostly 2-3 cm x 4-6 mm. Seeds mottled light grey-brown on dark tan. Occurs sporadically from near Goomalling SSE to near Jerramungup. Flowers August-September.

var angusta Phyllodes linear to +- oblong usually acute, mainly 4-8 cm x 2-3.5 mm. Flowers July-September. Seeds mottled dark-tan on pale grey-brown. Usually occurs south of var mimica.

A. patagiata - Common from Pingrup E to near Mt Ney. Rounded shrubs 0.5-2.5 m tall with stiff incurved phyllodes 2.5-5.5 cm x 3-8 mm; flowerheads golden, globular July-September.

A. torticarpa - from near Yorkrakine and South Kuminin. Shrubs ? with pale golden new growth. Phyllodes leathery incurved 3.7-5.5 cm x 2-3.5 mm. Ball flowers on short or no stalks. Flowering July.

A. unguicula - from Mt Singleton between Wubin and Paynes Find. Open shrubs 1-2 m or tree with white hairy new shoots. Phyllodes rigid 2-4 cm x 3-4 mm. Deep golden ball flowers in spring.

Three new W A species with affinities to A. wilhelmiana. Species of this group are shrubs or small trees which mostly share many common characters:

A. ascendens found only from Chiddarcooping Nature Reserve about 70 km NE of Merredin. Shrubs to 1.5- 2 m tall; new shoots resinous. Phyllodes 4-nerved +-terete 2-4 cm long x c. 1 mm wide. Racemes of golden ball flowers in June-September.

A. brachypoda - Known only from between Brookton and headwaters of Darkin River. Dense shrubs to 2 m tall; new shoots resinous, pale green. Phyllodes 2-5 cm x c. 1mm slightly shiny 4 nerved. Golden ball flowers on very short stalks in May-June.

A. cowaniana - restricted to few granite outcrops around Kellerberrin and Kulin. Shrubs or small trees to 5 m tall; phyllodes resinous narrow-linear 3-5 cm x 1-2.5 mm usually with 3-7 nerves. Cream or pale lemon-yellow ball flowers in racemes April-July.

NEW SPECIES from South Coast of New South Wales. Extracted from a paper by M.D.Tindale and A.B.Court in 'Telopea Vol 4 (1) September 1990.

Acacia blayana. Tree to 25m tall with dark grey bark, bipinnate leaves and whitish new growth. Golden yellow ball flowers in racemes in September-early October. Occurs in Wadbilliga National Park on South Coast.

Extracted from paper in the above journal by M.D.Tindale and C. Herscovitch.

Acacia courtii -found only from North Brother Mtn, Camden Haven State Forest and Middle Brother Mtn and State Forest. Tall shrub or weeping tree 7-20m tall with dull green phyllodes 11-18 cm x 4.5-8.5 mm with 1-3 nerves. Flowers pale yellow spikes in November-January. Closely allied to A. orites.

Extracted from 'Plant Portraits' by Cowan & others in Journal of Adelaide Botanic Gardens, Vol 13 September 1990.

Acacia hexaneura - endemic to NE Eyre Peninsula between Kimba and Cowell. Dense prickly shrub 1-1.5 m tall with angular branchlets. Stipules persistent and spiny. Phyllodes angular, rigid 5-17mm x 1.2-2 mm. Flowers golden yellow balls July-September. Most closely related to A. enterocarpa.

Acacia praemorsa - endemic to NE Eyre Peninsula known only from four localised populations. Erect often suckering shrub 1-3 m tall with angled stems. Phyllodes erect or spreading, flexible 2-9 cm x 1.2-2.4 mm 1-nerved. Flowers bright yellow balls sporadically and October-December.

Wishing you a Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.

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Acacia Study Group Newsletter