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ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS  
ACACIA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER No. 65  
FEBRUARY 1992

Dear Members,

It has been great to hear from those of you who have written since the last newsletter. Most enclosed membership subscriptions for the current year, while several requested information of what they owed. I have appended a membership status note to the end of this newsletter, which I will fill in before posting, so each member may know where they stand. No further newsletters will be sent to those not financial before the sending out of the next newsletter which I hope will be in early July.

I have not caught up with all the group's past activities yet, but I have the seed bank sorted out and have read some of the past correspondence which is still relevant.

I would like to sound out members on several aspects of the group's activities. Rather than write at length here, I will break it up under various headings. This newsletter is mainly a "thinking aloud" exercise and I hope members respond with their opinions as the group exists to meet the special interests of the members.

**SEED BANK** - There are several lots of unidentified seed and excess stocks of others. Much of this is of indeterminate age. I have offered supplies of those species which we hold in excess to regional seed banks for the cost of packaging and postage. At the time of writing Queensland, N.S.W. and Tasmania have responded to this offer.

As a result of this contact with seed banks a limited number of seeds of species not on the last list are available. Libby Fielding of N.S.W. has supplied A. obtusifolia and A. ingramii. Tasmanian seed bank curator, Christine Howells has sent some A. drewiana. Victorian seed bank curator Alf. Salkin has supplied Acacia alpina, continua, difusa, glaucescens and nano-dealbata seed, while Queensland curator Helen Andrews has supplied "Acacia paniculata".

This last one is a bit confusing. I am no expert on taxonomy but there seems to be indecision about this species. Pedley who specializes in Queensland acacias moved a sub-group of them to a separate genus "Racosperma", which included Racosperma paniculatum then moved some Racosperma back to Acacias, (Newsletter No. 62). Here R. paniculatum is changed to A. racospermoides. Pedley in "Acacias in Queensland" (1987) states that R. paniculatum has been confused with A. homaloclada, but differs most conspicuously in having heads in terminal panicles. Helen has informed me the seeds came from members at Mackay and that it is the White-stemmed Acacia. Elliot and Jones, (Encyclopedia of Australian Plants Vol. 2) refer to A. homaloclada as suitable for tropical and sub-tropical gardens, describing it as an "extremely decorative wattle" with pink new growth and a white trunk.

If any member knows of possible suppliers of these species could you please let me know. I notice A. stenoptera is also missing from the list. I have some seed of this and can supply and replace when I get around to ordering stock from commercial suppliers.

Due to the limited supplies please make alternative choices from our list when ordering. If the demand exceeds available seed, I shall send only a small number of seeds to each and try and apportion those in heavy demand among all requests received within 3 weeks of posting the newsletter. To assist in this please

place your requests in order of preference. Thanks to Libby, Christine, Alf and Helen for the seeds.

At the other extreme, seed very much in excess of likely demand by members is held of the following:

acradenia	argyrophylla	bancroftii	chinchillensis
cultriformis	dealbata	decora	doratoxylon
elongata	excelsa	extensa	hemsleyi
holosericea	iteaphylla	lasiocalyx	leiophylla
leptoloba	ligulata	limbata	longifolia
macradenia	melanoxylon	muelleriana	neriifolia
obliquinervia	oswaldii	papyrocarpa	pendula
platycarpa	podalyriifolia	pravissima	pycnantha
rigens	saligna	sclerosperma	spectabilis
suaveolens	subulata	victoriae	xiphophylla

If anyone can use larger quantities of these species, (some are of indeterminate age), it would relieve demand on storage space. Postage and a padded post bag for quantities too bulky for "business envelopes" costs about \$2-70. (If you find it convenient to pay in stamps, please do so in 45¢ ones.) To get some idea of quantity, I suggest you order by the "teaspoonful". This offer holds while excess stocks last. If the seed is to be used for other than private or public purposes an additional small donation would be appreciated.

**SEED BANK SUPPLIES** - Seed in the bank is either supplied by members or purchased from commercial suppliers. Some seed is in excess supply while other species are either out of stock or in short supply. Many species are not available commercially. Seed not on the list is always welcome. Demand for seed varies - some species have not been requested by members for 10 years.

Storage of large quantities of seed is not justified and it would be convenient if members who can collect seed from various species on the list could hold some seed and supply it when required. To this end could members provide a list of species and forms for which they can supply seed upon request, so that all members might have access to as wide a range of seed as possible.

**NEWSLETTER** - The main purpose of study groups is to study various aspects of a particular genus or group of genera. In some respects acacias present some problems to such undertakings. Grown mainly from seed, there is inherent genetic variation between individual plants. Variation of environment, including temperature, water, soil and neighbouring plants can also effect results from individual plants. Where so many species of plants are grown over wide areas it is difficult to coordinate results to produce general conclusions. However your experiences may be valuable to others.

I have recently seen copies of newsletters from a number of other study groups and most contain articles by members. These cover a wide range of topics, from member's excursions, details of research carried out and general descriptions of species, growing conditions and observations, gardens, problems etc. The length ranges from short notes to one of 18 pages. Some include drawings.

If members could write at least one article for this newsletter per year, we could share our experiences and results while at the same time creating a reservoir of knowledge for future reference.

The size of our newsletter can be increased to about 18 pages without an increase in postage. I feel member's contributions would prove more interesting

than the limited amount of information available to me at present and allow active participation in the group to those with something to offer. It can also be used as a forum to raise problems encountered.

**ACACIA PROJECTS** - There are a number of projects which have been suggested in past newsletters, but which do not seem to have reached fruition. Two of these are:

**Small plants** - There are two aspects to small acacias, container plants and those small plants which can be used in small gardens. In "Growing Acacias" Marion Simmons lists 24 species suitable for growing in containers, while 33 small species are listed in the S.G.A.P. publication "Grow What Small Plant". These lists can be extended as more experience is gained and more species become established in cultivation. Small acacias are the ones with the most potential to attract the home gardener. Acacia enthusiasts are the people to pioneer the use of further species in these situations.

How about sharing your experiences of small acacias or growing some in different types of soil, with different fertilizers etc.? A number of plants should be grown for each treatment if possible, so as to study the variation of the species under similar conditions.

**Slides** - The Study Group has several boxes of slides, which I have not looked at yet. Marion Simmons had raised the possibility of a set of slides with an audio tape. I feel at least one set of acacia slides, would help promote an interest in acacias in general. While videos are probably the coming thing, slides will enable more people to contribute to such a project at moderate cost.

In the long term we may aspire to a number of sets, but a general introduction should be the immediate aim. I am thinking in terms of these 6 sets:

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1- An Introduction to Acacias.    | 2- Acacias of South - Eastern Australia. |
| 3- Acacias of Northern Australia. | 4- Acacias of Western Australia.         |
| 5- Small Acacias.                 | 6- Acacias for Parks and Farms.          |

Please let me know your thoughts on this and if you are likely to be able to provide any slides. The Acacia Study Group should reimburse members for providing slides. **DO NOT FORWARD SLIDES YET.**

**LARGE AND TROPICAL SPECIES** - We should not forget the tropical and sub-tropical species or the large species which are more appropriate for (To page 4) open areas.

**MEMBERSHIP STATUS & SUBSCRIPTIONS** -

Name .....

Records show you are: Financial until .....  
Not Financial for 1991-92.

Subscriptions are: 1991-92 \$3-00 1992-93 \$4-00.

The increase for 1992-93 is to cover duplication costs and postage increases.

A.S.G.A.P. policy is that ALL membership fees of study groups are due on 30th June each year. Records indicate quite a lot of fees have not been paid for 1990-91. No further newsletters will be sent to unfinancial members. Subscriptions for 1992-93 will be accepted if you find it convenient to pay arrears and next year together. I have no records of when most members joined, only a date when 1991-92 subscriptions were paid. The above is the record of your membership status. If you disagree with that shown please let me know.

Queensland members are best positioned to share experiences of growing and observing the tropical species while from their addresses I assume there a number of group members in rural situations where acacias are used in shelter belts and wood lots. Items about these are welcome.

Bruce Clark.

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\* Group member Fred Rogers has been awarded the Australian Natural \*  
\* History Medallion for 1991. \*  
\* Fred is probably best known to Acacia enthusiasts for his book \*  
\* "A Field Guide to Victorian Wattles". \*  
\* I currently have the papers of the Warrnambool Group, with \*  
\* a view to preparing a group history, and Fred was the first outside \*  
\* speaker to the group on 19th August 1977. In April 1989 he returned \*  
\* to speak on "The Flora of the Little Desert." He has shared \*  
\* his knowledge and enthusiasm with many groups over the years and \*  
\* is a worthy winner. \*  
\* Congratulation Fred. \*  
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*The Elms" PANNURE VIC 3265*

