

S.G.A.P. ACACIA STUDY GROUP
NEWSLETTER NO. 7
OCTOBER 1971

Mrs I B Armitage
10 Anembo Road
Terrey Hills
NSW 2084
Telephone 4501652

To all those members who sent interesting and encouraging letters, who answered questions and gave advice, who sent seeds and specimens, my sincere thanks.

SEED BANK: Am pleased to advise this matter is now closed. Not a dissenting voice was raised to my second alternative, although there were a couple of ifs and buts. Sadly, Mrs McHaffie sent in her resignation while July Newsletter was actually being printed, and Miss Pearce did not reply to my personal letter.

You will see that the number of species in the bank has been greatly increased. The majority of the newly listed species have come to us through the generosity of Mr George Althofer. *A. aculeatissima* is in great demand, in fact, even our one USA member has asked for it, but so far all efforts obtain seed of the prostrate variety have failed. I have a couple of hopeful promises for later on.

One or two people have asked for more than 30 packets of seed at once. In addition to packaging and labelling, all seeds issued are recorded. This all takes considerable time, so in view of increased membership and much longer seed lists, I am afraid orders must be limited to 14 packets at weekly intervals.

MEMBERSHIP: 21 new members have joined the Group since July; 11 from Victoria, 5 from South Australia, 2 from Queensland and 3 from NSW. A complete list of members is enclosed.

BOOKS: Further to July Newsletter, "How to Know WA Wildflowers' Vol 1, Blackall & Grieve, out of print. So far unable to obtain from any sources. "Handbook to Plants in Victoria" (Vol 2). The author, Mr J H Willis advises that this volume will appear as two separate books to be purchased together at approximately \$21. Hopes it will be available early 1972. "Your Australian Garden" series, No. 5, "Shrubby Acacias" compiled by one of our members, Mrs Chandler, and published by the David G Stead Memorial Wildlife Research Foundation of Australia, is a must for all acacia addicts. It describes about 80 of the smaller and most fascinating species and has a couple of pages of line drawings. It is difficult to study this little booklet without wanting to plant the whole lot immediately. Unfortunately, many of the seeds are, so far, unobtainable. The booklet indicates those species which are growing at Wirrimbirra. Members wanting to buy seed from them should write about December to see whether their particular requirements are available. Meantime the booklet can be obtained by writing to the Foundation, Box 4840, GPO, Sydney. Price 50 cents plus 7 cents postage. Write to the same address later on for seeds.

FINANCE: Further to July Newsletter total receipts \$39.10 and expenditure on duplicating, envelopes and postage April and July Newsletters \$28.10. This leaves \$11. Extra cost of printing seed list plus list of members, and allowing for more copies of everything to cover increased membership will leave us about \$10 short after mailing this Newsletter. For next year SGAP NSW have offered to pay the cost of duplicating Newsletters. So, 20 cents per member will make up the \$10 short for 1971 and 33 cents per member should cover cost of postage and envelopes for 1972 (4 x 7 cent stamps and 5 cents for 4 envelopes). Total 53 cents.

There are many additional expenses such as correspondence and postage in connection with obtaining and dispatching seeds, seed envelopes, periodical reprinting of Seed Lists etc. So I feel it is not unreasonable to ask for a subscription of \$1.00 per member to cover all costs to the end of 1972. If there is anything in the kitty at the end of the year I'll let you know!

HOMEWORK: Remember I said I would be asking for details of certain species? Well, here we go. As there are quite a number I have started with half the alphabet only. I feel this is terribly important and the only way we can start to collect worthwhile data, so PLEASE COOPERATE. Could I have approximate age, height and spread (shrubs only), a very brief comment (4/5 words) on how it's doing, type of soil and annual rainfall. Please

also state whether artificial watering is given after first year. Recorded plants must be at least 1 year old. In alphabetical order, as usual, please.

<i>acinacea</i>	<i>boormanii</i>	<i>enterocarpa</i>	<i>gunnii</i>
<i>aculeatissima</i>	<i>brachybotrya</i>	<i>ericifolia</i>	<i>iteaphylla</i>
<i>acuminata</i>	<i>brachyphylla</i>	<i>extensa</i>	<i>jonesii</i>
<i>alata</i>	<i>calamifolia</i>	<i>farinosa</i>	<i>lanigera</i>
<i>amoena</i>	<i>collettioides</i>	<i>flexifolia</i>	<i>lasiocalyx</i>
<i>anceps</i>	<i>continua</i>	<i>gilbertii</i>	<i>leprosa</i>
<i>aneura</i>	<i>cuneata</i>	<i>gladiiformis</i>	<i>ligulata</i>
<i>armata</i>	<i>cupularis</i>	<i>glandulicarpa</i>	<i>microbotrya</i>
<i>axillaris</i>	<i>decora</i>	<i>glaucoptera</i>	<i>microcarpa</i>
<i>baueri</i>	<i>dentifera</i>	<i>gonophylla</i>	<i>mitchellii</i>
<i>beckleri</i>	<i>diffusa</i>	<i>gracilifolia</i>	

ACACIAS IN TUBS: I hope that anyone who has the chance to exhibit in any SGAP or other Wildflower Show already has or is making plans to cultivate them to bloom at about 2 years old. So far I have going well several *A. drummondii* and one each *A. amblygona*, *A. pulchella*, *A. continua*, *A. collettioides* (probably much too big) and *A. sclerophylla*. Apart from *A. drummondii* I don't know whether any of these will oblige by flowering at 2 years. Someone asked what size containers. I propose to take mine up to bucket size. If they won't flower under these conditions or get too root-bound I'll have to put them in the ground, as anything bigger than that becomes too heavy for me to handle.

MEMBERS' COMMENTS: In reply to my query as to **suitable acacias for wet areas**, Robert Coveny and Mr George Althofer give the following information:- Seen growing on creek banks and damp places:- *binervata*, *irrorata*, *longifolia*, *floribunda*, *glaucescens*, *fimbriata*, *muelleriana*, *prominens*, *subporosa*, *schinoides*. I can confirm *A. fimbriata*, as I inadvertently put one in what turned out to be virtually a bog for about 4 months last autumn/winter. At about a year old it looks strong and healthy. To continue, seen in swampy land:- *elongata*, *longissima*, *ptychoclada*, *rubida*, *siculiformis*, *stricta*, *stenophylla*, *verticillata*.

Mr George Althofer's name will be, to most of you, synonymous with Nindethana Seed Service, but perhaps not all members are aware of the tremendous work he has done for Burrendong Arboretum, and that he has recently been appointed its first Director and Chief Botanist. Despite the enormous amount of work he copes with, and without the assistance of a secretary, or even a typewriter, he has just taken the trouble to list the 140 species of *Acacia* at Burrendong, with the very encouraging news that 71 species have already flowered. If you would like to help support this wonderful project, join the Burrendong Arboretum Association. It costs only \$2.50 a year. For this very small sum you receive a most interesting quarterly news bulletin, and the satisfaction of assisting, in a very small way, the efforts of half a dozen dedicated people who put in a prodigious amount of work every year. Send your subscription to the Hon. Treasurer Mr J Fraser, "Mehrua", Baker's Swamp, NSW 2742.

In reply to a query on the **use of superphosphate**, Mr Des Nelson (Arid Zone Research Station, Alice Springs), writes:- "I have used both plain super and "complete super", which has trace elements added, but have not noticed much difference between the effect – both good. I have also used urea with good effect. I only resort to chemical fertilisers if a seedling is not doing well, not necessarily because of slow growth, but if plants appear chlorotic or are dropping leaves. I merely sprinkle a handful of fertilizer around the young plant and water it into the soil."

Mrs Kennedy **tip prunes** all her acacias with very satisfying results. I tell her all species in her garden look the same, as they all assume a beautiful symmetrical shape, but she likes it that way. Mrs Lyndon is also a firm believer in pruning. She has planted approximately an acre of Council land in a very windy spot at Leongatha, Vic, and says the plants would never stand the wind if they were allowed to get at all leggy, so she keeps them as low and bushy as possible. She extends a welcome to any other "wattle-oh's" (lovely expression – hers) who may be passing through Leongatha.

Mrs Harvey wants to know whether anyone has an idea for **cheap sheep guards**.

Mr Jacobs has a "dwarf *decurrens*", 4 years old, 8ft high, semi-prostrate branches, bought as *A. jonesii*, but definitely identified as *A. decurrens*. Has anyone else anything similar?

Mrs Winn has had trouble with *A. cultriformis* **damping off**. Has anyone else experienced this?

Mrs Oxnam has come to the defence of **Mrs Marion Blackwell** who wrote the article "Landscape Plan for a New Garden" without mentioning a single Acacia. Mrs Oxnam says that the people for whom the garden was designed specifically requested no acacias.

All year round flowering: Several members have mentioned this. I recently received a letter from a non-member in Victoria who says his slackest time for acacia flowering is January, when he has 8 species in bloom. He wrote to me in September when he had 501. May have more information on this later. Meantime Mr Jacobs has had non-stop flowering since December 1969 and has promised to let me have copies of published articles on this subject.

Mrs Young wants advice on **acacias which will stand very wet summers**, sometimes as much as 50" rainfall in 2½ months.

PATENT PENDING: Ever lost a precious seedling because it came up with its seedcase attached and either you broke the seedling in trying to pull off the seedcase or it stayed on and the seedling shrivelled away? Well, here's how to overcome this. If your seedling is not already in a container by itself, transfer it to the tin or tube in which you intend it to grow. Fill a jam jar absolutely to the brim with water. Get two pieces of very thin but rigid plastic (such as that commonly used by nurseries for labelling plants), lay these across the top of the jar with a space in between. Then rest your tin or tube upside down on the plastic strips with the top of the seedling fully immersed in water. Leave in a warm place (sun, if it's not too hot) for half to one hour. If the seedcase has not come off by itself it will be soft enough and loose enough to be easily but carefully removed. This delicate operation has, so far, never failed.

SEED GERMINATION: I am convinced that results justify the slight extra work involved in sowing seeds in individual pots. In recent sowings I have been using only 5 seeds per species, but with *A. gonophylla* and *A. wilhelmiana*, the seeds being so small, I treated quite a number with sandpaper. I then sowed 5 each into individual pots and the remainder into punnets. Germination was very good, about 80%, but whereas all those in pots, now transferred to tubes, are in good health, almost half those transferred from punnet to tubes have departed this life.

AND TO END ON A PERSONAL NOTE: I want to apologise for any delays which have occurred in the past and will possibly occur in the future in replying to correspondence or sending seeds. Feel I should explain that when I took on this job in March I only had two other quite minor unpaid secretarial jobs. Since then, however, I have been more or less forced by circumstances to take on something far more time consuming and infinitely less to my taste, that is to join the Committee to Stop Duffy's Forest Airport. This is an iniquitous project to build an airport just one mile from our home on a plateau of land which projects into the heart of Kuring-gai Chase (the best National Park anywhere near Sydney) and is enclosed by it on three sides. In fact 23 acres of the airport site once formed part of the Chase. I'm sure you can imagine what this entails:- letters, phone calls, petitions, meetings, press and radio announcements, delegations etc. So please bear with me.

AND THAT'S THE END OF THIS NEWS BULLETIN. NEXT ONE JANUARY 1972. AND PLEASE DO YOUR HOMEWORK.