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CALLISTEMON STUDY GROUP

NEWSLETTER No. 7 OCTOBER 1981

Leader - Doris Phelps, 17 Fourth Street, Loxton. 5333.

In newsletter No. 6 (Jan. 1981) I told you how well the Callistemons on our previous property were standing up to the extremely hot summer, even though they were not being watered. Although the summer continued with record heat-waves, and there was no worthwhile rain until the end of May, all the plants that were alive in January have survived. *C. citrinus* seems to have suffered most, and looks as though it will not flower this year, but most of the others are looking quite healthy. Once the season broke, we had quite a wet winter, with very little frost, which no doubt helped them to revive. It is interesting to compare the survival of Callistemons under these conditions with the description on page 4 of conditions under which *C. citrinus* survives in Wales.

I have previously told you that when, in September 1980, we moved into the town, we were fortunate in being able to obtain, with the house that we bought, a larger-than usual town block. As there was an established garden at the front of the house, we planned to have our native plantation in the vacant land at the back. This is on a slight slope, facing south-east, with several feet of red sandy loam over limestone marl. After marking out an area for fruit trees and vegetables, we were left with a roughly L-shaped patch, extending down one side fence and along the back fence, which faces on to a street. (Our block runs through from one street to another.)

In planning the new plantation, I had several ideas in mind. Firstly, the main planting would be Callistemons. Secondly, I wanted an effect of "islands" of plantings, with paths winding around them, so that it would not be possible to look straight through from one end to another. Each "island" was to consist of one or two large shrubs, surrounded or fronted by several smaller ones and some ground covers. Thirdly, I was aiming at future ease of maintenance.

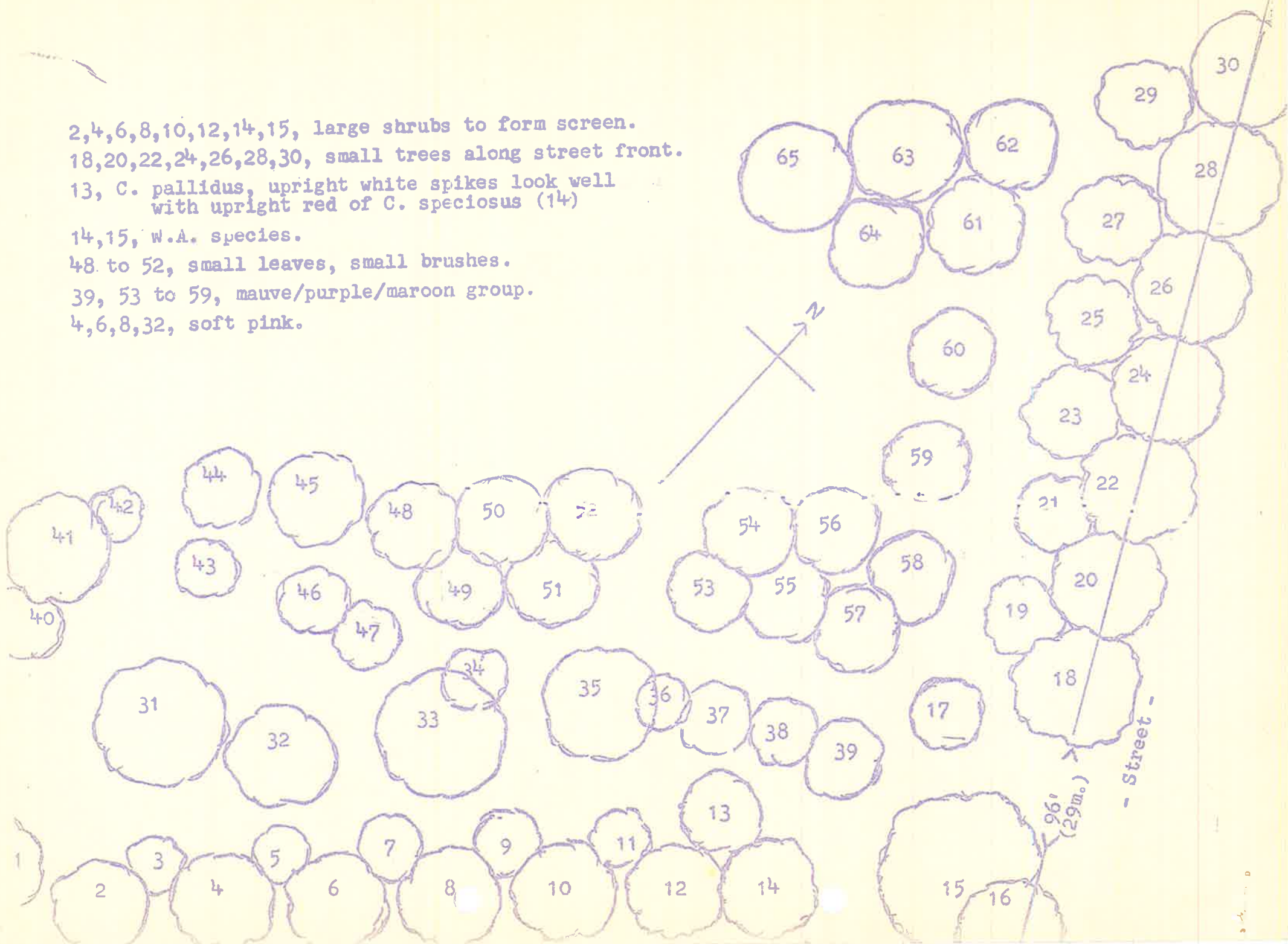
Most of the larger shrubs have been planted, and many of the smaller ones, but we have not pushed ahead with ground covers, as the soil is badly infested with Galtrop and Oxalis (sour-sob), and the dutch hoe will be constantly in use until these are controlled. Eventually, the pathways, and any other areas without cover will be allowed to return to grass and will be mowed.

On page 2 is a plan showing our plantings. I hope it will be of some interest to members. The Callistemons native to South Australia, *C. macronunctatus*, *C. brachyandrus*, and *C. teretifolius*, are to be planted along the northern fence, not shown in the plan.

You may notice that I have not included *C. "Harkness"* and *C. "Captain Cook"*. This is because *C. "Harkness"* has been planted in nearly every garden in Loxton, and also rows of them in several streets as street trees; and I have yet to see a *C. "Captain Cook"* that lives up to the reputation it was given when introduced.

The "island" plantings include a number of small shrubs not shown on the plan, mainly *correas*, *grevilleas*, and *thryptomenes*.

2,4,6,8,10,12,14,15, large shrubs to form screen.
 18,20,22,24,26,28,30, small trees along street front.
 13, *C. pallidus*, upright white spikes look well
 with upright red of *C. speciosus* (14)
 14,15, W.A. species.
 48 to 52, small leaves, small brushes.
 39, 53 to 59, mauve/purple/maroon group.
 4,6,8,32, soft pink.



1. *Banksia Ericifolia*
2. *Callistemon formosus*
3. *Pavonia hastata*
4. *Callistemon "Baroondah Station"*
5. *Astartea heteranthera*
6. *Callistemon* sp. (salmon pink)
7. *Myrtaceae* sp.
8. *Callistemon* sp. (salmon pink)
9. *Melaleuca spathulata*
10. *Callistemon linearifolius*
11. *Calothamnus* sp. (small)
12. *Callistemon "Endeavour"*
13. *Callistemon pallidus*
14. *Callistemon speciosus*
15. *Callistemon phoeniceus*
16. *Leptospermum laevigatum*
17. *Grevillea "Robyn Gordon"*
18. *Callistemon polandii*
19. *Calothamnus* sp. (small)
20. *Callistemon polandii*
21. *Acacia rotundifolia*
22. *Callistemon polandii*
23. *Callistemon "Tinaroo"*
24. *Callistemon polandii*
25. *Callistemon comboynensis*
26. *Callistemon salignus* (pink)
27. *Callistemon "Guyra Hybrid"*
28. *Callistemon acuminatus*
29. *Callistemon citrinus "Red Clusters"*
30. *Callistemon salignus* (white)
31. *Myoporum floribundum*
32. *Callistemon "Injune"*
33. *Callistemon citrinus*
34. *Callistemon citrinus* (white)
35. *Hibiscus huegeli*
36. *Grevillea sericea*
37. *Westringia rosmarinifolia*
38. *Westringia grevillina*
39. *Callistemon subulatus*
40. *Grevillea "Crosby Morrison"*
41. *Grevillea asplenifolia*
42. *Dryandra formosa*
43. *Thryptomene saxicola*
44. *Melaleuca decussata*
45. *Calothamnus* sp.
46. *Melaleuca* sp.
47. *Kunzea preissiana* var. *glabra*
48. *Callistemon pityoides*
49. *Callistemon viridiflorus*
50. *Callistemon sieberi*
51. *Callistemon* (ex Blackdown Tableland)
52. *Callistemon shiressii*
53. *Callistemon citrinus "Eastland"*
54. *Callistemon violaceus* (wine)
55. *Callistemon pallidus* (purple)
56. *Callistemon violaceus* (mauve)
57. *Callistemon subulatus*
58. *Callistemon subulatus*
59. *Callistemon "Mauve Mist"*
60. *Callistemon montanus*
61. *Callistemon "Ewan Road"*
62. *Callistemon* sp.
63. *Callistemon pinifolius* (green)
64. *Callistemon linearis*
65. *Callistemon pinifolius* (red)

From Anne Boden, 36 Carstensz Street, Griffith, A.C.T.

Callistemon enthusiasts would undoubtedly regard bottlebrushes as horticultural plants rather than plants of economic value. In 1889, J.H. Maiden in his book, 'The Useful Native Plants of Australia' included two bottlebrush species in the chapter on local plants utilised for their timber.

He wrote of Callistemon lanceolatus, now known as C. Citrinus: ' "Red Bottlebrush"....."Water Gum"..... Wood hard and heavy; it is used for ship-building, wheel-wrights' work, and many implements, such as mallets. Its shavings will bind like a ribbon.'

He described C. Salignus:

'Called "Broad-leaved Tea-tree", "River Tea-tree", "Stonewood" and "River Oak"..... Wood very hard and close-grained; it has the reputation for being very durable underground. It has been used for engraving, but with no marked success..... It varies in colour from a uniform drab to dark red, and some specimens have a very pretty grain which looks well under polish. It is fairly easy to work, and dresses admirably. Two slabs of this wood in the Technological Museum (now known as the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney).....(were) exhibited at the London International Exhibition of 1862....'

Callistemon in Wales.

Anne Boden also sent the following item taken from Vol. 5 No. 1 of the SGAP Newsletter of the Canberra Region. The item was originally published in The Garden, June 1980.

In spite of awful warnings that it would not survive here in the Usk Valley climate and my exposed situation, I grew Callistemon citrinus from seed sown in 1971. Half a dozen bushes flowered well in 1977 and again in 1978. Surprisingly, one facing west and sheltered from the east by the house was in full flower even after the exceptional winter of 1978-79 which killed so many of our hebes.

The other bushes, seemingly killed, were cut back, and yet they all produced abundant new shoots at the base the following year. This year or next, hopefully, they will be flowering better than ever.

Incidentally, the seed was obtained from the very hard 18-month-old fruits by the simple method of putting them in my electric coffee grinder for a single, short "buzz". As far as I know this idea is original; has anyone else tried it? It may well work for other hard-shelled, fine-seeded fruit; eucalyptus perhaps?

Anne Parris, Usk, Gwent. (Wales)

My thanks to Anne Boden for her contribution to this newsletter. As well as the above two items, she has contributed the larger article enclosed.

From Phyllis Dadswell, 10 Duffield Street, Gawler, 5118.

"In the Nursery, the only Callistemons I am asked for are C. "Harkness" and C. "Captain Cook". Occasionally I am asked for C. viminalis and C. citrinus. When C. speciosus was flowering several customers bought plants, and when C. salignus produces new foliage that sells too. One of my customers is very fond of Callistemons and has quite a number planted out now. She told me she likes them so much because they are very hardy, one cannot overwater them, they do not have pest problems, the flowers are very beautiful, and native birds are attracted to them."

From Lindsay Daniels, P.O. Box 201, Biloela, 4715.

I always grow and sell some Callistemons from my small native plants nursery. The ones I sell most of would be viminalis, polandii, "Tinaroo", "Captain Cook", and salignus, with a few "Injune", formosus and others.

If I were asked to say which was my favourite species of bottle-brush, I would have to say C. polandii. It has good form, attractive foliage (reddish tinted leaf tips at times) and is a prolific flowerer with dark red, red, or deep pink brushes with gold tips. I know of at least four forms of C. polandii. As with many Callistemons, there is great type variation even in nature. It is a native of coastal Queensland from Cape York down at least as far as Rockhampton, although it does not appear to be a common plant in any locality.

CALLISTEMON POLANDII

I was interested in Mr. Daniels' reference to a number of forms of C. polandii. In my new planting I have four of this species, and although I have seen only one of them in flower, their foliage indicates that they are all different.

My first C. polandii, described in previous newsletters, was grown from seed from the S.A. SGAP seed bank. It has never shown pink or red new growth. One of my present plants is a cutting from it. My second form has been grown from a cutting sent me by Aileen Black of Valentine, N.S.W. It has pink young growth and much larger leaves than the other.

The third one is from seed sent by J.P. Shanahan of Rockhampton. The foliage on this one turned deep purple during winter, and young growth is pink. This also has broader foliage than the first, but of slightly different shape than the second. Two other people who have planted specimens from this same batch of seedlings have reported that they tend to become chlorotic.

My fourth one was grown from seed from the Q. SGAP seed-bank, and is said to be maroon.

I am looking forward to seeing all these in flower so that I can compare flowers as well as foliage.

While buying plants for my new plantation I came across two which I believe are the same as those I have been calling C. citrinus (white) and C. pallidus (purple). In the nursery they were named C. citrinus "White Anzac", and C. "Violet Clusters". I also bought a plant named C. citrinus "Eastland", which has turned out to be a pretty pinky-mauve. The brush is a little sparse, but as the plant is still young, it may improve.

From Alan Lacey, 46 Swan Street, Eitham, 3095.

"I would be pleased if you could re-advertise members re availability of cutting material. I've had several lots of cuttings from other members; but undoubtedly there are still a number of good forms that should be more widely grown."

Would any member willing to supply cuttings for exchange please let me know and I will publish this in the next newsletter. Contact can also be made directly between members living near each other, with a view to exchange of seed or cuttings.

Membership. The membership lists published in newsletters Nos. 4 and 5 are still current. Below is a list of those who have joined or renewed membership since then.

Jennifer West RSD School Road, Billiang East. 3340.

Mrs. V. Tebb, Box 26, P.O. Churchill. 3842.

Daphne Neville, Sandalwood. 5309.

M.E. Holmes, 11 Goldsworthy Road, Ethelton. 5015.

Douglas Patience, P.O. Box 3925, Alice Springs. N.T. 5750.

Colin Cornford, 16 Eldorado Street, Bracken Ridge. 4017.

Heather Knowles, Lot 2 Ebenezer Road, M.S.F. 366B, Rosewood. 4340

Beverley O'Keefe, "Wallalee", Springsure. 4722.

Alan Foster, 40 Fairfax Road, Warners Bay. 2282.

R.J. Horne, Lot 381 Green Street, Ulladulla. 2539.

SEED BANK

Thanks to Beverley O'Keefe, Malcolm Campbell, Harry Infield, Lindsay Daniels and S.K. King for seed contributed to the seed bank. More contributions would be welcome.

Please remember that when requesting seed a stamped envelope should be included.

In the seed bank now are seeds of *Callistemon* *acuminatus*, *brachyandrus*, *citrinus* (red and white), *chisholmii*, *comboynensis*, *linearis*, *linearifolius*, *macropunctatus*, *pachyphyllus* (red, white, green), *pallidus* (white and purple), *paludosus*, *pinifolius* (green), *phoeniceus*, *polandii*, *rigidus*, *salignus* (pink), *shiresii*, *speciosus*, *subulatus*, *teretifolius*, *viminalis*, *violaceus* (mauve and wine), *viridiflorus*. Also "Barcoondah", "Ewan Road", "Compacta", "Guyra Hybrid", "Injune", "Tinaroo", and Polandix "Tinaroo".

Mr. King sent four packets of seed, two of which he says are of "Alpine" bottlebrushes, one red and one green. His other two are *C. citrinus* "Splendens", and *C. Dawson River*". However, he adds a note, as I have done before, that "forms" such as the latter two may not come true from seed.

A friend and I have recently seen the result of named cultivars being grown from seed instead of cuttings. We each bought a plant (from different sources) which was named *C. citrinus* "Endeavour". They have recently flowered, and, except that both are bottlebrushes, are quite different from one another. Mine appears to be a form of *C. citrinus*, so I think it is my friend who has been diddled. And he paid \$6 for his plant!

From Beverley O'Keefe. "Wallalee" Springsure. 4722.

In reply to Mr. Daniels' comment re scale - I have 33 varieties and the only ones which have suffered from scale are violaceous and salignus, and either chisholmii or formosus (I can't remember which). 3 plants of violaceous had hard black scale and the others had small white scale like little pencil marks. This is in spite of the fact that a number of the locally growing trees which grow up close to the garden fence usually have a large amount of scale on them. Mind you, a number of my plants are under 6 months old, so a fair trial has not been made. Melaleuca radula has also suffered badly, and a few other melaleucas slightly. I have found that a good spray with white oil has fixed the problem.

Mildura Bottlebrush Festival.

From 'Your Garden'

Mildura, on the southern banks of the Murray River, could soon become as famous as Grafton (with its jacarandas) Bowral (with its tulips) and other towns that have put themselves on the map with mass displays of a particular plant.

Under the supervision of Mr. Bill Hyder, Superintendent of City Parks and Recreation, and with the blessing of the city fathers, more than 2000 Callistemons have already been planted in preparation for the city's first Bottlebrush Festival in October 1984. Two Callistemons particularly suited to soil conditions of the area, *C. "Harkness"* and *C. viminalis*, are being used for street beautification and should provide a mass of colour for five to six weeks each spring.

Callistemon acuminatus. (From N.S.W. Region Newsletter Nov. 1980)

By Dr. Ken Phillis, Forester.

Native Plants 15(5) p8, lists *Callistemon acuminatus* as a plant at risk (based on CSIRO work). *C. acuminatus* is alive and well and living in the Camden Haven. I know of three patches here, and have sighted the shrub scattered on other localities nearby. The first is in the 6B's Forest Preserve in the Broken Bago State Forest, about 15 km south of Wauchope The second is in Compartment 122 of Kerewong State Forest, about 15 km east of Comboyne The third is on the south face of Middle Brother State Forest where it is found with *C. comboyneensis*, *Westringia amabilis* and *Eucalyptus agglomerata*.

I have *Callistemon acuminatus* in cultivation. I have found it extremely easy to grow from seed. The seedlings are a little slow for about three months, but from then on are about as vigorous as any shrub I have grown, native or exotic! The flowers are red and very showy, and the pink tips on new leaves make this shrub an attractive proposition even outside the spring flowering season.

Callistemon cuttings.

An item of more-or-less useless information. Four years ago, I put some *C. phoeniceus* cuttings into a 50/50 mixture of peatmoss and sand. Two struck, and were potted on. Two others just "sat", neither dying nor growing, but each holding on to one live leaf. Recently, I tipped them out and examined them. They were showing no sign of rooting, so I dipped them in rooting hormone and put them back. The shock should either kill or cure! I wonder how much longer they would have hibernated if I had left them alone.