

## ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS

## CALOTHAMNUS STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER

Number ten

June, 1988.

Leader: Barb Graham,  
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## Financial statement for year ending 30-6-88

Receipts

Brought forward	£38-87
Membership fees	20-00
Donations	14-00
	<u>72-87</u>

Expenditure

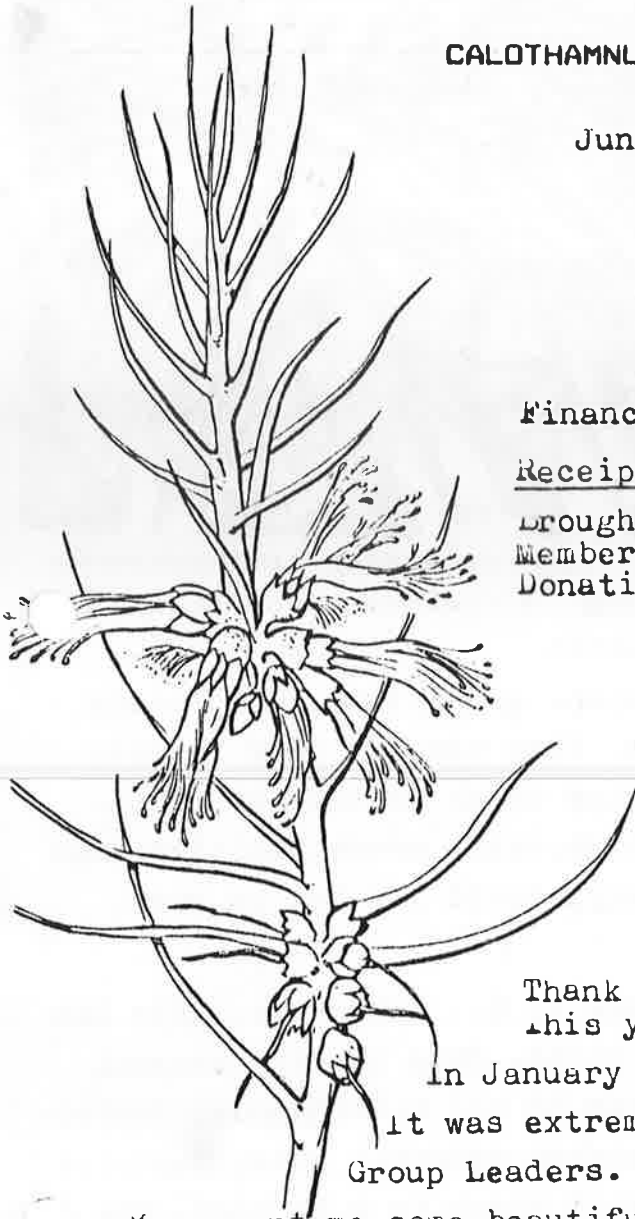
Folder for descriptions & key.	£4-18
envelopes	2-40
photocopying	
2 newsletters	15-00
Stamps for newsletters	19-98
stamps for correspondence	2-81
	<u>44-37</u>
Cash in bank	28-50
	<u>72-87</u>

Thank you for your donations & fees.  
This year's fees of £2 are due on 30-6-88.

In January I attended the ASGAP Seminar in Canberra. It was extremely interesting & great to meet other Study Group Leaders.

Kaye sent me some beautiful slides of the lovely Calothamnus she has growing at her place at Jervois in S.A.. When I take a few more I will put together an audio-visual which will be able to be borrowed. She also told me about the ever increasing bird population in her planted area. I had realized that the honey eaters are very keen on Calothamnus owing to their long flowering period & rich nectar, but Kaye also said, 'The colonies of blue wrens love their dense canopy for protection and can be seen hopping in and around them in their never tiring search for insects. Working quietly in the garden one day one of these small delights flew onto my shoulder, didn't stop long, but show the trust they build up when they feel secure in an area.' Kaye has over 100 Calothamnus plants of all sizes from new to mature bushes.

I was very thrilled to hear from Mr. Hawkeswood who has been doing a lot of work with Calothamnus. He kindly sent me a lot of information on his work which included some newly described species. One of these was *C. graniticus* which Val had been enquiring about. I had hoped that



I would also have a plant of this by now, but after shooting well the cutting gave up. This species sounds as if it would make a good garden plant, so we will be very interested to

hear further news of Val's plant. *Calothamnus graniticus* subsp. *graniticus* grows on granite

outcrops in heath vegetation on the Cape Naturaliste Peninsula in S.W. Western Australia. It flowers mainly between May &

June in clusters or irregular spikes usually on portions of stem from which the leaves have fallen; the style often being persistent in the fruit. The subsp. *leptophyllus*

flowers from June to August, the flowering spikes being longer than the previous subsp.

The name, *leptophyllus* is from the Greek meaning thin or threadlike, referring to the leaves which

are much thinner & longer than those of the subsp. *graniticus*. The fruits are wrinkled often with smooth irregular bumps. They usually grow in Euc. woodland on the western side of the Darling Range which is east of Perth.

Both of these subspecies grow to about 1.5m. high, being erect, multistemmed shrub. So good luck with yours, Val. By the way, could you let us know where you got it?

Another interesting newly described *Calothamnus* is *C. tuberosus*. This has been named for the waterholding tubers on its roots. This is very unusual in the family Myrtaceae especially as the leaves of all *Calothamnus*, including this species, have very thick cuticles & sunken stomates which restrict water loss. It is an erect, much branched, gnarled shrub to 2.5m high. The deep orange red flowers are in dense spikes near the end of the branches either in amongst the leaves or on portions where the leaves have fallen. They flower from September to February, depending on the climatic conditions of the previous season. The leaves are erect, terete with sharp points & prominent oil glands. They are crowded on the ends of the branches.

As can be seen from the masses of seed capsules there must be a brilliant flowering in a good season. We must keep looking for some propagation material of this species as I think it also would make a good garden subject. Of course the only way to find out would be to try. It certainly gets very frustrating. When I go to western Australia next year I certainly will be looking for these and other hard to obtain species. But I suppose it will not be easy with not much time.

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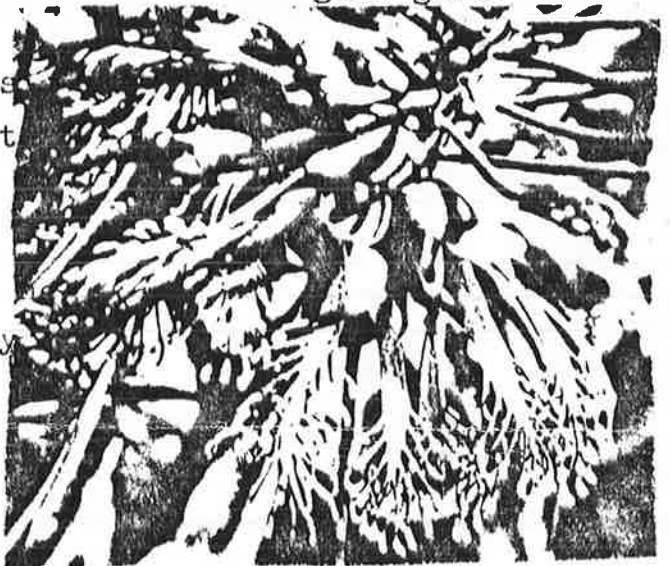


Figure 4. Close-up of flowers of *Calothamnus graniticus*

(*T. J. Hawkeswood* subsp. *graniticus* at Eagle B)

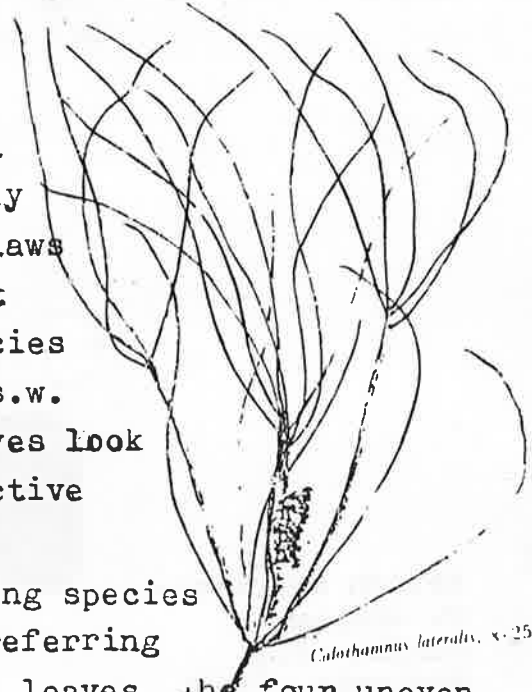
Cape Naturaliste. Photo M. Peterson.



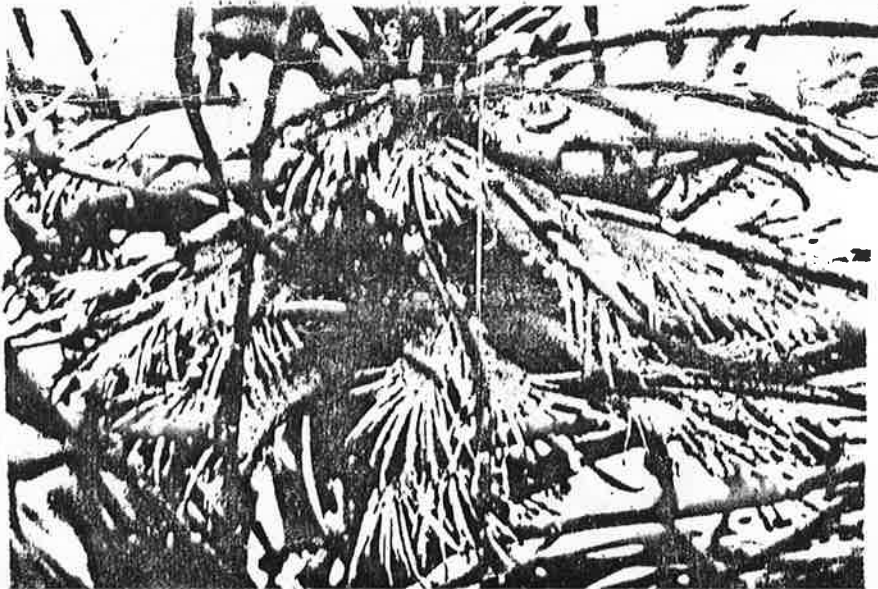
I think that this is one of the most important jobs of our study group, finding propagating material, seeds or fresh cuttings, of the more unusual species of *Calothamnus* to try in different gardens in as many climatic areas as possible. Because quite often a plant in the wild may not look as if it will make a good garden subject, but when grown in a garden can be quite different. The species which I have seed in the seed bank of which there are no or few reports on are; *Calothamnus graniticus* var *leptophyllus*, *homolophyllus*, *pinifolius*, *torulosus*, *torulosus* var *leptophyllus*, also a prostrate form of *homolophyllus*. So if someone would like to increase our knowledge of these species by growing them it would be greatly appreciated. It amazes me that *Calothamnus* grow so well in so many different areas, but of course there are still many areas that we don't know about, so the more people who will grow them & send in reports the better. On the humid Queensland coast Heather has *Calothamnus quadrifidus* & *homolophyllus* growing & flowering very well, while Rhoda has *C. asper*, *quadrifidus* & *validus* doing well near the N.S.W. central coast. This shows that these species will withstand humid conditions but I would like to see other people in like areas join our study group & grow some of the other species.

*Calothamnus lateralis* is a dwarf to small spreading shrub, *lateralis* meaning 'at the side' referring to the way the flowering spike is fixed on the side of the stem, with the calyx completely embedded in the corky stems. The four staminal claws are crimson & yellowish-green towards the base. It mostly flowers between June & December. This species grows in swampy or marshy ground in the coastal s.w. corner of western Australia. The fine, long leaves look most attractive making this small shrub an attractive garden specimen which doesn't mind some shade.

*Calothamnus longissimus* is another small, spreading species with very long, narrow leaves, the specific name referring



to these leaves. The four uneven staminal bundles are a deep red. This species grows on gravelly soils north of Perth in low, shrubby heath communities. Its environment has been whittled away by agricultural land clearing. This would also be a good species to try in home gardens. Small colourful plants which appeal to our bird friends are always welcome.



Thank you to all the hard workers, but it is great working in the garden isn't it? I find it a great excuse to get outside.

Best wishes,

Barb.

Thank you very much for your subs & donation. As you can see from the Balance Sheet, it will be very useful.

S.G.A.P. Qld Region,

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