

ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS

CALOTHAMNUS & ALLIED GENERA
STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER

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I was thrilled to receive a lovely pressing of Rhoda's *Calothamnus asper*. The flower spike was 18 cm long, looked very attractive. It is the first flowering for this bush which looks spectacular. More about a dried flower collection later in this newsletter.

Recently there was a workshop for Study Group Leaders at the National Botanic Gardens in Canberra, and I was lucky enough to be able to attend. It was very interesting to get together with the other leaders & be able to hear about their problems and how these were solved as well as their successes. As well as discussion sessions to discuss our problems and their resolution, there were sessions on newsletter production, history and reasons for Study Groups, how to keep accurate records, questionnaires, how Study Groups can assist botanists and botanic gardens & vice versa, horticultural research carried out by Study Groups, publishing information, seed banks, collecting seeds and cuttings, living and herbarium collections.

I found all of these discussions very interesting, particularly about collections. The legalities and ethics of collecting in the wild This is very important to know, as we could so easily break the law or even worse spread disease in delicate environments without the proper knowledge. We should also keep a duplicate or duplicates of our living collections in case of the one and only being wiped out. As you know I am starting a collection at Dulegal Arboretum, so will see if Kaye will keep our duplicate one as she has already a wonderful collection. This is why it is also important that I know the plants that all of the members have growing. I have these all in a notebook, so it would also help if you would let me know if any of the plants die. It is also useful to know where the plant came from, especially if the propagating material came from a natural area.

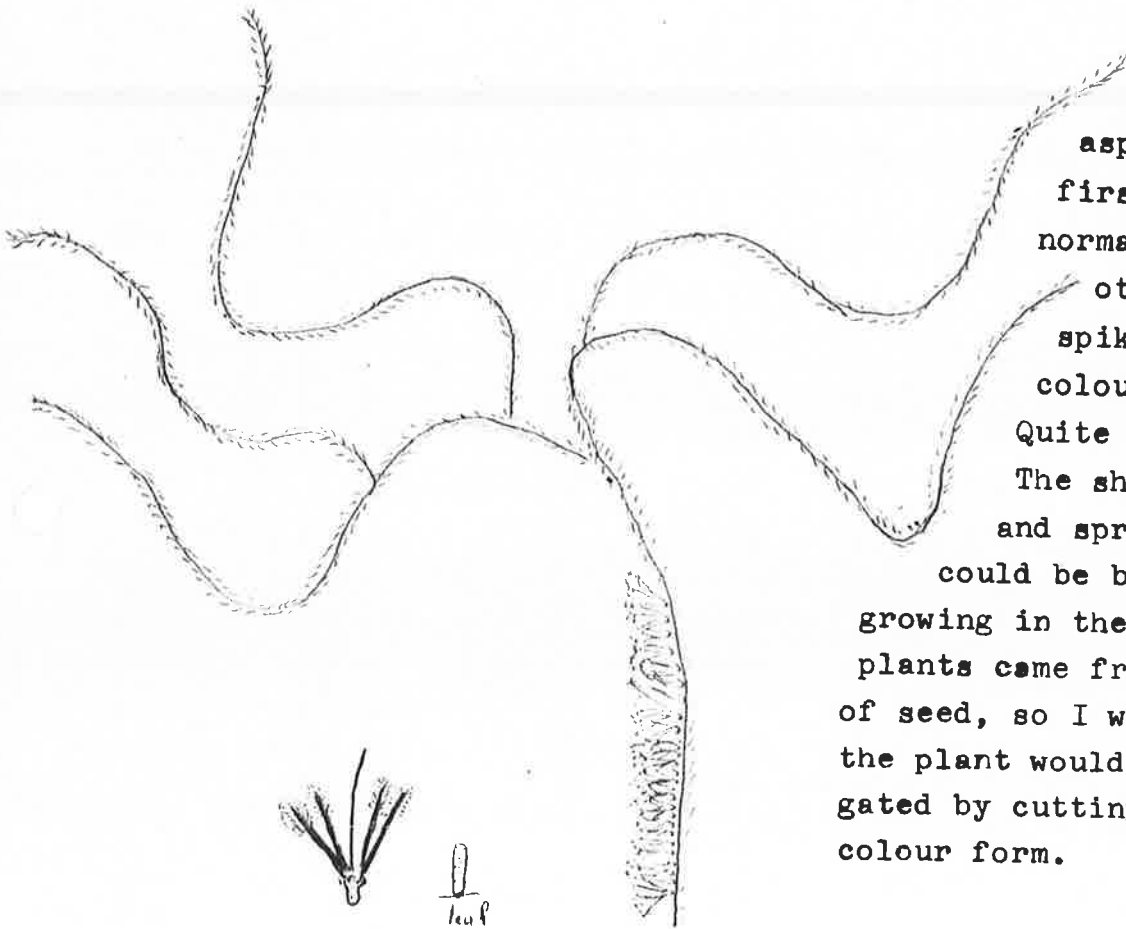
Guidance for setting up a Herbarium was very useful, as ours has just been kept in a box, which is not very safe. So I have bought a hardcover binder with some see through covers, and as soon as I can get hold of some mounting cardboard I will start on the Herbarium. The main use for our Herbarium will be for identification as well as trying to separate the different forms of *C. quadrifidus*. So I would welcome any pressings of *Calothamnus*, *Beaufortia*, *Eremaea*, *Regelia* or *Phymatocarpus*. There are instructions in N.L.13 for pressing, but if not mounted just pack carefully. I need a flowering spike with leaves & if possible seed capsules. If that would be too large the seed capsules could be separate. A description of the shrub & what conditions it is growing are needed. For those collected in the bush a detailed description of its position, including a map reference if possible. But if you intend collecting in the bush, please get in touch with me if you don't already know the legalities of doing so.

We had quite a few rainy days in the early spring when I started planting small *Calothamnus* plants at the Arboretum, so they got a good start * * * * * but * * * winter was only delayed and we had some really bad frosts. But the grow tubes did their job well and the only one frost bitten was *Calothamnus graniticus* and even it has nice new shoots now. As *C. graniticus* is supposed to be a small shrub, I planted at the bottom of the hill where the grass gets mowed often. *C. rupestris* from Kaye's seed (the very large shrub) is planted on a bit of a point where the ridge drops down, one that I hope is *C. macrocarpus* is beside a dead stump further up the hill. I have left plenty of room around the *C. quadrifidus* so that the many forms can be shown. Of course the seed from these will probably not be able to be used for propagation as I would think that they would cross pollinate. But there should be plenty of cutting material. Some *C. validus* have been planted near some wattles just near our S.G.A.P. shrub beds. There are also a couple of unidentified ones which I hope to be able to ID when they flower. Three different forms of *C. quadrifidus* are flowering wonderfully in the picnic area. The variety *hirsutus* looks wonderful with the deep red flowers contrasting so well with the grey foliage. The one that I have at home, in a pot for cutting material, flowered off and on all winter!

I forgot to say earlier that I also planted a *Calothamnus homolophyllus* (seed from the Kalbari area) in the vicinity of the *C. quadrifidus*, as Kaye has a *Calothamnus* which we think must be a cross between these two species (they are very closely related) as it has seed of *Calothamnus homolophyllus* but terete leaves. *C. quadrifidus* can have flattish leaves, but *C. homolophyllus* always has flat ones. So it would be good to plant the hybrid between the two species, when I get one growing.

On a recent trip on the Canning Stock Route Kaye was pleased to find a lot of *Calothamnus* bushes and collected some seed for our seed bank. Unfortunately it wasn't flowering, but everything else pointed to it being *Calothamnus aridus*. Especially growing in that area, it is the only one which is known to grow there. (by the way there is a description in newsletter no. 16) She has written down exactly where they are found, so when I go that way next year I will look forward to seeing them. Unfortunately it will be a similar time of the year, so there probably won't be any flowers out then either.


Then when she was near Coral Bay she found *Calothamnus borealis*, the most northerly growing of the species. Kaye had seen them growing there some years ago, so did well to find them again, especially as we gained seed for the seed bank.



Bill also has a couple of *C. asper* flowering for the first time, one the normal red, but the other, a lovely long spike, is a lemony colour with pink anthers. Quite remarkable!

The shrub is rather open and sprawling, but that could be because it is not growing in the full sun. Both plants came from the same batch of seed, so I would imagine that the plant would have to be propagated by cutting to keep that colour form.

Some of our members have seed from the seed bank of *Calothamnus torulosus* and the variety *leptophylla*. If anyone has these growing could you let me know, and send a flower when it flowers, as the ones I have grown are definitely not the species mentioned. It looks as if it could be another variety of *Calothamnus quadrifidus*. *C. torulosus* is a small, spreading shrub, while the plants I have grown (from more than one envelope of seed) is a very tall & not very spreading shrub, as well as having quite different flowers.

I have five quite different *Calothamnus quadrifidus* seeds in our seed bank. No. 1 is the one that seems most common, thick, spreading shrub, masses of flowers in medium sized spikes; No 2 is a smaller shrub, very attractive with narrow leaves, longer than those of No. 1 and reddish stems ; No 3 has reddish new shoots & slightly flat leaves; No 4 is var. *hirsutus*, a medium to large shrub, the deep red flowers contrasting well with the densely haired grey foliage; and No 5 is the one that is not *C. torulosus*! Of course No 6 will be the yellow flowering, low growing form when I get a bit more seed. I thought I had plenty on the bush, but a closer look revealed lots of frost bitten buds.

If anyone has other forms of *C. quadrifidus*, please let me have a description, and if possible place of origin.

Last autumn I put some *Eremaea* cuttings in (I think *beaufortioides*) and they look to be shooting well, so hope they plant out well. *E. purpurea* seed germinated well, but the strong looking plants all browned off and died, except one which was eaten! I used my usual seed raising mix, but think this may have been a bit heavy, even though it was sand, but very fine and contained quite a bit of mica. I will try again, but with a coarser sand this time.

Also tried cuttings of *Regelia velutina*, no shoots yet, but looking pretty good.

Our Allied Genera could do well grown by cuttings, so anyone who could spare some cutting material would be appreciated. Some of the old notes I have read tell about the difficulty of growing by seed, although Graham successfully germinated most of these species in loamy soil.

I hope everyone has a happy time for Christmas and New Year.

All the best

Barb