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CALOTHAMNUS STUDY GROUP

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Thanks to all those who have sent in their reports & observations. A study group can't operate without these. We are lucky in having active members in S.A., Vic., coastal N.S.W. & inland N.S.W. I would like an active member from Queensland to compare their climate effects on Calothamnus. Any takers?

Thanks also to those of you who have sent in subs for 1985. We are out of the red thanks to getting the newsletter done cheaply.

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A little more about rare & endangered species of Calothamnus. Last newsletter I listed the actually endangered species. I have since read a bit more in "Rare or threatened Australian Plants" published by the Australian National Parks & Wildlife Service. Calothamnus blephar-antherus has been presumed extinct as it has not been gathered from its area of natural occurrence. Vulnerable species (those which are not yet endangered, but could easily become so) are Calothamnus affinis, lateralis, microcarpus, pinifolius, & validus. Calothamnus asper, planifolius & robustus are considered rare but well represented in reserves. If we can come by any propogating material, I think we should try to grow these. In years to come garden specimens could be used to restock natural areas.

I haven't had any reports of cutting successes, but had some good results myself. Kaye had sent me some cuttings, each species wrapped separately in damp newspaper then the little packets firmly wrapped in plastic before being parcelled & posted. I dipped the cutting ends in a hormone liquid & planted them in a pot of sandy loam. A large plastic bag was put over the top with two bows of wire inside the bag to stop the plastic from touching the cuttings. As it was quite warm weather these were put in the semi shade. After about a month the plastic bag was removed & when signs of growth were seen I gradually moved the pots into the sun. Calothamnus quadrifidus was the first to shoot & have transplanted well. C. gilesii, pinifolius, villosus, torulosus, rigidus & homolopholus were also successful.

I will take some more cuttings from these soon in case the plants I have planted out get frost bitten.

Val Maher from Victoria has reported on an interesting Calothamnus sanguineus which is prostrate. I have noticed from other reports of

this species that it is generally a bush form, so Val's should be valuable as a cutting source, although Val hasn't had any success as yet. Kaye also has a species which, in its natural environment is quite a low & spreading bush, grows near the sea & has a grey green foliage. It will be interesting to see if it keeps its habit when grown in a different environment. She also has a species which has very deep bronze new shoots in the spring. Her *C. validus* also has reddish tipped foliage. If anyone has similar could you let me know?

Another interesting *Calothamnus* that Kaye has growing is a yellow flowered *C. quadrifidus*.

Could someone tell me if *Calothamnus* seed stays on the bush for some time as *Callistemon* does, or does it fall off?

Rhoda Jcavons will do some germination tests, but naturally it will be a long time before we hear results. Her *C. asper* flowered well last year supplying many honey eaters with meals! It certainly grows well in the humid climate of the N.S.W. central coast. So does *C. quadrifidus*. There has been a lot of difference in reports of *C. gilesii*. It seems to be a very hardy species with some people reporting small, insignificant flowers, while some others have been rich red profuse flowers.

I think we should be taking seed & cutting material from the more attractive forms. Talking about differences in species Kaye has eight *C. quadrifidus* growing, all different but attractive. *C. villosus* also looks like being one of the top species too, lovely grey foliage with large bright red flowers. A friend of mine has a beautiful one that flowered well this spring. He gets quite hard frosts but his *Calothamnus* are growing in a protected position on sandy soil.

I hope it will not be too long before I have enough reports to make a detailed listing. Just hope there will be a Queensland member who can give some information.

Best wishes & good gardening,

*Barb*