

Since our last newsletter we have had many new members join. Welcome and look forward to hearing from you and having your observations, comments, or any interesting experiences you would like to share with your group.

Spring has arrived with all its winds, it is a good time to think about plants growing in containers. Many plants do not tolerate extremely high winds which will cause major damage. This is true whether the plant is growing in a pot that is large or small. The hanging plants in baskets are at high risk for damage. Plants need to be sheltered during these harsh winds. Important to remember that during very dry windy weather (at least where I live) things have a tendency of drying out, almost as fast as they are watered. It is important to keep this in mind and increase the amount of water they are receiving or you will have a dehydrated plant. Not only does this effect the water level in the plant but water is how the plants takes up its nutrients. Many plants are drought sensitive. A plant growing in a container, that is not watered enough or dries out too quickly is similar to being in a drought condition. The plants roots can not reach out to obtain ground water when in a pot. In some areas where there is dry conditions the potting mixture may need to be changed to a heavy mixture to allow better water holding properties. There are plants that do not like wet feet especially plants from WA.

An excellent new book available is "Australian Native Plants for Indoors" by David and Patricia Ratcliffe. In this book is description of Grevillea robusta "Silky Oak", the plant we are all use to seeing tall in yards and woodland. This plant can according to the above authors and another reference book called Wrigley and Fagg Banksias, Waratahs & Grevilleas, can be made into a house-plant with regular pruning. It does require a medium to bright light, and prefers the full sun. It is recommend to either propagate from seed or cuttings. This Grevillea is also used the rootstock for many of the grafted grevillea varieties. So if you grew this plant and decide it isn't to your liking, you can always change it by grafting.!!

Most of us have had the pleasure of a walk through an rainforest where we admire the trees and bushes. It is possible to grow some of these trees in containers. One of the easier varieties to start with is Davisonia pruriens 'Davidsons Plum'. This can be propagated from fresh seed or a cutting. The flowering period is from October to January. You won't find these seeds in a package!!! This plant prefers light potting mix, prefers a moist environment, and needs to be kept out of the direct sun. This tree not only has lovely leaves but produces a blue-berry in January which can be made into Jam. To keep this tree container size it is critical to prune.

QUESTIONS

Janet Kollosche writes that she has a "Correa mannii always flowers beautifully but is getting little leggy and probably could use harder pruning." Any help on this question? I can't identify this species in any of my books.

SPRING SEASON

What do we need to do in the spring to our plants that are in containers? Many things similar to the fall, but we must get our plants ready for a growth period. Therefore it is time to check the potting mix that the plants have been in all winter and assure that the roots of the plants are okay, no pest are present, the soil is still fresh, and the pot is the correct size for the plant. If you only fertilize twice a year now is the time.

POTTING MIX

The potting soil we use for plants are important. How about input on what type of soil you are using for your plants, and which plants you use which one for, anyone using the new standard? Has any one tried the new cocopeat yet, I could not manage information as to the pH and only that it is enriched. One always has to be careful and check the pH of any new potting mixes being used to assure they are compatible with the plant due to be planted.

What interesting plant have you grown in a container and include details. Share with all of us your story.

Happy potting !!!

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