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SOCIETY FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS

CORREA STUDY GROUP

NEWSLETTER NO.

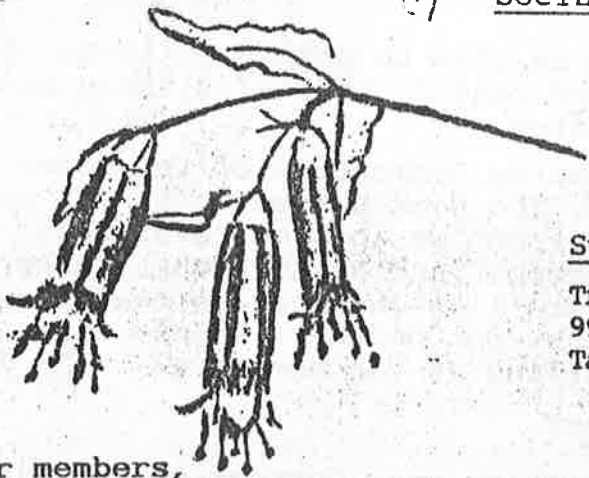
Group No: 5

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Dear members,

As I write this newsletter I listen to the glorious sound of rain; all the tap watering you give is no comparison. To rainwater our plants come alive again don't they?

As I write I feel a little sad as this is to be my last newsletter; I'm handing over Leadership to our Herbarium Curator, Maria Hitchcock, who is a very active member. As well as compiling our herbarium collection and gathering information on the cultivation of Correas for Australia and further expansion into NSW..

While I lost so many Correas in February after 5" of rain, then heat, Maria lost only a few. While we had no disease in our Correas Agricultural Research Officers examined our disasters and said that because we had heavy rain in their growing period thus lowering the Oxygen levels below critical levels they just couldn't handle it when the extreme heat after, it was just too much for them.

This is the third year that the Correas have died in the same fashion. Most of our C.reflexas died except "Canes Hybrid", "Marions Marvel", and some of Marion Beek's hybrids which haven't flowered yet. Even at our arboretum which is cooler but on different soil type, we only lost 4 which we thought was a good result.

I blamed my moisture holding soil a lot but Pam's garden slopes of a hill and her Correas also "went down like flies" too.

Now a letter from our Correa friend Dewi Price titled "Correas in South Wales.

My interest in CORREAS came about some twenty years ago after reading an article in a gardening journal. At the same time I received a catalogue from TRESEDE'S NURSERY TRURO CORNWALL which listed C. lawrenciana, C. decumbens and C. punchella. Plants were obtained and grown in a sheltered spot in the garden. The C. punchella was killed within three years following a hard frost.

As business took me to various parts of the country and I was able during subsequent years to visit various nurseries and country houses which propagated plants, by 1985 my holding included C. lawrenciana, C. lawrenciana 'Rosa', C. alba, C. backhousiana, C. bauerlenni, C. calycina, C. decumbens, C. reflexa 'Cranes Hybrid', C. schlechtendalii, C. X 'Dusky Bells', C X 'Mannii', and C X 'Harrisii'.

Most of these were grown in clay pots in a soil compost (2 soil, 1 sphagnum peat, 1 perlite, 1 grit) and kept outside, but taken in to our unheated conservatory when frost was imminent. However, in January 1987 there was a sudden frost when the temperature dropped from 10°C to -10°C and this lasted for a few days. As a result all the plants were killed even the original C. lawrenciana.

Plants were no longer available from the previous source because they had suffered loss and in any case the demand for plants was very

low and not commercially viable. However I was able to obtain cuttings of *C. lawrenciana*, *C. backhousiana*, *C. decumbens*, and *C. pulchella* (pale pink flowers) and these were successfully propagated.

The bungalow is located on the Mumbles Promontory of the Gower Peninsula and is 150 metres above sea level. The back garden looks out over Swansea and the Welsh Hills to the north, at front we look out over the Bristol Channel and the distant coast of Somerset and North Devon. In spring and autumn we are battered by the South Westerlies which occasionally achieve gale force. There is occasional snow and frost but neither is long lasting. Annual rainfall is 50 cms (some of it is falling at the moment.)

Thank you Dewi and hope for continued success.

I really like to hear how other members grow *Correas* so here is lovely article from Len Hopley, Hawthorne SA.

I think that one of the main reasons that I have taken to growing *correas* is due to the fact that the soil and micro-climate of the Mt. Lofty ranges appears to suit them. Where I have my garden, midway between the Adelaide plains and the top of the ranges is cooler by 2-3 degrees than the plains. Also the soil ph must be slightly acid to neutral although I have not tested it to make sure what the correct ph is. One day I may get around to doing test.

I first started off with *correas* in 1975, the year that I decided to go 'native'. I started off with *pulchella minor*, *mannii*, *backhousiana* and *lawrenciana*. The latter three are still alive and flourishing after all these years. I now have a modest collection of other species but have by no means allowed my garden to be taken over by them. They are planted where they have the advantage of partial shade during the hot days of summer. But the beauty about them is that they can be planted right up against the butt of a eucalypt and still do well. They seem to mix very well with *prostantheras* (my first love), inasmuch as both species seem to like the same conditions. Though some species of *correa* are tougher than . For example *decumbens*, *calycina*, *schlectendali*, and *alba* will take almost full sun for most of the day, whereas some of the *pulchellas* and *reflexas* must have some shade.

Correas are ideal as pot plants and that is how I'am growing some of the more special ones. I have found that a mix of washed sand, milled pine bark 50-50 to which is added 30% of isolite works well. I also cover the surface soil with a very fine gravel. I add a slow release fertilizer to the mix depending upon the size of the pot. By the use of pots one can grow quite a large collection of *correas* and also give special ones more attention than they would receive if in the ground. For instance I have *alba* variegated and pink flowered forms also *reflexa* clearview giant and *reflexa* Pt Campbell form all in pots. Special plants like these are safer in pots where they can be given more attention, are safer from pests and can be moved as desired.

I have grown a few from cuttings. Such as *lawrenciana*, *reflexa-decumbens* K1 form, *bauerlenii*, *calycina* and *schlectendali* gold. The new foliage on the latter plant is beautiful gold colour and it grows into quite a large bush. I have this one and *calycina* next to each other and they are almost as big as one another. Both are large dense shrubs, a real haven for small birds. I have a white flowered *correa* (I think Tasmanian), and last year took cuttings which didn't strike for some reason or other. So I will try again this coming autumn. I have never thought about trying seeds. In fact our seed bank in Adelaide has as far as I know never offered *correa* seed to members. I would like to know more about the collection and germination of *correa* seed as a means of propagating the species.

I mentioned birds in the last paragraph, and would advise members wishing to attract the eastern spinebill to their gardens to grow *lawrenciana*

The spinebills in my garden love the hanging bells on this large shrub

(or small tree). Unfortunately the aggressive wattle birds often chase the smaller birds away. I think most species of *Correa* would be attractive to honeyeaters. *Calycina* is also beloved by spinebills, but *lawrenciana* being more open allows a better observation to be made of the birds.

Garden pests are no real problem for *correas* as they don't appear to be prone to attack by slugs and snails during the wetter months. However, during the dry weather I have had trouble with the leaves being eaten by a nocturnal pest. Evidently some type of beetle is responsible. I have found that a leaf mulch around the plants seems to encourage beetle attack. It seems that the beetle uses that litter as a haven during the day and then comes out at night to attack the plant. Plants which I have heavily mulched with pea straw as a mulch have not so been attacked. I recommend pea straw as a mulch generally and not only for *correas*. It does look untidy, but is very beneficial to the soil and allows for a cooler root run.

I'm sure members will find Len's article interesting as, I did.

Cherrie Densley in her garden, what lovely *Correas*. It is lovely to put a face to a name, and I was right about Cherrie, lovely bubbly and full of life.



Cherrie borrowed our slides and thought they were fantastic (her words). She then sent them of to David Widdop and I think they are both fired to collect the ones they haven't got. Cherrie was given some lovely cuttings by John Knight and gave him some in return. Your *Correa* count must be climbing high now. Cherrie and thank you for your lovely letters about *Correas*.

Cherrie has had several field trips to Portland heathland and says it was unbelievable, white, blush pink, lipstick pink, black/red etc. I can visualize you Cherrie in a field of flowers (*Correas* of course, like Julie Anthony in *Sound of Music*, singing, dancing.)

Also visited Mt. Clay

Also Dartmoor Forest, Narrawang, and others.