

EPACRIS STUDY GROUP

Group Leader: Gwen Elliot, P.O. Box 655 Heathmont Vic. 3135

NEWSLETTER

No. 26

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September 2008

Greetings to all Epacris Study Group members,

Spring is here once again, and thankfully many areas have had reasonably good rains in recent months. It is however still surprising to note just how dry the soil is if we dig down a short distance.

Our Australian Plant Society group undertook some planting in a local reserve in early August and the clay-loam soil was really quite dry about half a spade depth down. The plants were given an initial drink, then survival will need to be up to them. Our fingers are crossed that many of them will make it.

These are sadly not the conditions that are enjoyed by most *Epacris* species. *Epacris* will be much happier if they have moist but well-drained conditions, with some supplementary watering during extended dry periods. A product which could be of assistance for special plants is mentioned on Page 3.

Once again we come to the time for membership renewals, and the date for renewal of each membership is included on the top left corner of your postage label. Many members now choose to renew for two years at a time, with more time to relax between renewal dates. For those whose membership is now due we do hope to receive your renewal so that you can continue to belong to the Study Group, and that you will wish to continue your interest in the genus of *Epacris*.

This newsletter includes our Annual Report and Financial Statement, and members will note that Newsletter postage was higher than normal this year, resulting in a small deficit of \$8.77 for the financial year. This was due to the fact that with our spring Newsletter last year members also received the booklet EPACRIS by Alice Talbot. It was felt that this publication was well worth sending to members, and the Study Group still remains in a sound financial position.

Sincere thanks to Study Group member Karen Russell, who for a number of years now has been our honorary auditor. We really do appreciate this help Karen, so thank you from us all.

Contributions for our Newsletter are always gratefully received. Do let us know your successes - and even any failures. There is much we can learn from each other. Our sheet for recording of flowering times is also included again on Page 7. It only takes a walk around your garden or local bush area each month and the information being collated will provide an ongoing record of *Epacris* in cultivation and when plants flower in different regions.

Best wishes for the remainder of 2008 and happy gardening,

Gwen E.

News & Notes

AN IDENTIFICATION KEY TO EPACRIS IN TASMANIA

What an absolutely delightful surprise to recently receive in the post a very special CD from **Dr. Ron Crowden** of Tasmania, entitled AN IDENTIFICATION KEY TO EPACRIS IN TASMANIA.

This is a project in progress for Ron, and not ready for release at this stage as he is still working on some of the photographs to be included, but even in this formative stage it is absolutely fascinating and *So So Exciting*. The photographs are superb. There are over 200 including habitat shots, photographs of the whole plant, close-up photos of the flowers and even microscopic magnification of leaves, leaf-margins, stems, buds, cut-away sections of flowers and other features which are important in distinguishing the different species.

I must admit that I have found it quite breath-taking, and so wonderful that Ron has devoted so much of his time into preparing a resource such as this which will be a real bonus for botanists and home gardeners for many years to come.

If interest is displayed in such a CD Ron hopes to then complete two further CDs. One will cover the whole genus of *Epacris* and the other will concentrate on all members of the Epacridaceae family in Tasmania.

How wonderful !

Very best wishes Ron in this ongoing work.

If study group members can help in any way I'm sure we will be delighted to do so.

A private garden with an impressive collection of EPACRIS

Shirley Carn has been grown Australian plants for many years in the Dandenong Ranges area of Victoria, about an hour's drive east of Melbourne.

Many members of the Australian Plant Society have visited the gardens which she has lovingly created and recently members of the general public had an opportunity when her garden at Monbulk was open in conjunction with **Australia's Open Garden Scheme** on September 6th and 7th.

Shirley is a member of the EPACRIS STUDY GROUP and has in her garden one of the best collections of *Epacris* species in Victoria. Her garden's inclusion in Australia's Open Garden Scheme this year was deliberately timed so that the *Epacris* would be at their peak, to provide a wonderful display for visitors.

Some of the many species in flower were various forms of *Epacris impressa* including plants with white, pink, deep pink, red and 'double pink' flowers, *E. barbata*, *E. coriacea*, *E. exserta*, *E. gunnii* - including the double-flowered form, *E. longiflora* - red/white, pink/white and salmon forms, several forms of *E. microphylla*, *E. 'Nectar Pink'*, *E. pulchella*, *E. purpurascens* and *E. reclinata*.

Shirley is a superb ambassador for Australian plants and is highly regarded by experienced and knowledgeable gardeners as well as being seen as a mentor by many younger people and those who only in recent times have discovered the beauty of our flora.

She is happy to welcome to her garden any Epacris Study Group members who are Melbourne residents or visitors to Victoria.

Contact details for the 'Carn Garden' can be found in the Australia's Open Garden Scheme's Guidebook and Website, or correspondence can be forwarded on via the Epacris Study Group.



Epacris impressa
Illustration
© John Armstrong

News & Notes

Propagation of *Epacris* from seed

In December 2006 I collected spent flowering stems of *Epacris mucronulata* which was growing in a pot. These stems were left in a brown paper bag until March 2007.

The very fine, almost invisible seed was then sprinkled over a pot of commercial seed-raising mix. The dried stems and leaves were chopped up and spread over the seeds in the pot, and the lot covered lightly with very coarse sand.

The pot was left outside in all weathers, and almost six months later, in September 2007, the first seedlings appeared.

In the following weeks more seedlings emerged and so did a green mossy substance. It grew very thickly and had to be removed with pointed tweezers before I could pot on the seedlings. This was very tedious but worthwhile.

I potted up about 60 tiny seedlings on November 11th, 2007. I have about 40 plants growing on, many are strong and healthy, but some are weak and slow growing.

I am looking forward to collecting more seed and trying again. I have a very healthy *Epacris myrtifolia* growing in a pot, so here's hoping for success again.

Faye Candy

What a great article. It certainly inspires us all to 'Have a go!'

Sincere thanks to **Faye Candy**.

Faye's results confirm previous experiences, indicating that the seed of many *Epacris* species does have an initial dormancy period. We need to be patient, either waiting a while before planting the seed, or making sure we do not throw out seedling trays for several months and wrongly assuming that the seed is not going to germinate. It is interesting to note that there is a period of 11 months between Faye's collection of seed in December 2006, and potting up the seedlings in November 2007.

Patience is obviously been well rewarded here, with has a good number of *Epacris mucronulata* seedlings to plant or to give to others.

Faye Candy has a new small garden in Berwick Victoria where the soil is sandy and she is adding mulch and cow manure in an effort to improve the water retention, as the water runs off so easily. She is also now growing many plants in pots and is enjoying being able to water these plants when they need it as one large tank and two smaller ones have been installed.

Summer Survival

I was recently reminded of a product which can be extremely useful for assisting the survival of new young plants or perhaps older non-drought-tolerant species such as *Epacris* in the garden.

It is a plastic water-bladder, sometimes sold as a Trickle Bag, Eco-Bag or Hydrosyph which can be placed around the base of a selected plant then filled with water. The bags hold around 20 litres of water and a wick-system enables moisture to be provided to the plant over a period of up to 6 weeks. The positioning of the bladder also maintains a cool, weed-free area which is beneficial for the root system.

The bladders can be re-used over a period of years, so can be re-positioned from season to season as new plants are added to your garden.

If you are unable to obtain these products in your local nursery you could contact the mail-order company 'Green Harvest' at 52 Kilcoy Lane via Maleny Qld, 4552. Phone 07 5494 4676. www.greenharvest.com.au. Email - inquiries@greenharvest.com.au

EPACRIS STUDY GROUP MEMBERS to June 2008

Australian Members

Dawn & Lyn Barr,	Swan Reach Vic. 3903
Sue Bendel,	Doncaster 3108
Winifred Bennett,	Greensborough Vic. 3088
Dr. Elizabeth Brown,	National Herbarium of NSW
Dick Burns,	Penguin Tas. 7316
Faye Candy,	Berwick Vic. 3806
Shirley Carn	Monbulk, Vic, 3793
Chris Clarke,	Thornbury, Vic, 3071
Jeanette Closs,	Kingston Tas, 7050
Ian Cox,	Kenthurst NSW, 2156
Dr. Ron Crowden,	Kettering Tas 7155
Betty Denton,	Eltham Vic. 3095
Simone Disney,	Leichardt NSW 2040
Norma Duff,	Lower Barrington Tas 7310
Gwen Elliot,	Heathmont Vic 3135
Pat Emms,	Loch, Vic. 3945
Will Fletcher,	Ridgeway Tas, 7054
Wayne Griggs,	Acton Park Tas 7170
Margaret Guenzel,	Ocean Grove Vic. 3226
Bill Gunn,	Ocean Grove Vic. 3226
Helen Kennedy	Whealers Hill Vic. 3150
David Lightfoot,	Surrey Hills 3127
Pat Macdonald,	Langwarrin, Vic, 3910
Dr. Max McDowall,	Bulleen, Vic 3105
John Mahoney,	Mt. Duneed, Vic. 3216
Barbara Nevin,	Saumarez Ponds NSW 2350
Malcolm Reed,	Epping NSW 2121
Jill Roberts,	Ulverstone Tas 7315
Barbara Rooks,	Montrose Vic 3765
Karen Russell,	Blackburn Vic. 3130
Kris Schaffer,	Murdunna Tas, 7178
Marion Simmons,	Legana Tas. 7277
St. Kilda Indigenous Nursery,	Port Melbourne 3207
Trish Tratt,	Emerald Vic. 3782
Phil Watson,	Mt. Rumney Tas 7170
Philip Wilson,	Woodend Vic. 3442

Overseas Members

Jeff Irons,	Heswall, Wirral, England
Mary Sue Ittner,	Gualala, California USA
Anthony Parry,	Würenlingen, Switzerland

Epacris Study Group Newsletters are also sent to the ASGAP Study Group Co-ordinator, State Secretaries and State Newsletter Editors of each State member body of the Australian Plants Society, as well as to Botanic Gardens and Universities where research on *Epacris* is currently being undertaken. Several regional groups of the Australian Plant Society are also affiliated with the Study Group and receive each Newsletter as issued.

Epacris Study Group FINANCIAL STATEMENT **for year 1.7.2007 - 30.6.2008**

<u>STUDY GROUP BALANCE - as at 30.6.2007</u>		<u>\$ 673.65</u>
<u>Receipts</u>	Memberships,	\$ 260.00
	Credit Union interest	<u>\$ 14.98</u>
		\$ 274.98
<u>Expenses</u>	Newsletter printing -	\$ 129.40
	Postage,	\$ 149.05
	New cheque book	<u>\$ 5.30</u>
		\$ 283.75
	Deficit for financial year 1.7.07-30.6.08	\$ 8.77
	BALANCE as per Maroondah Credit Union Statement	<u>\$ 664.88</u>
<u>Maroondah Credit Union Accounts -</u>		
<u>\$ 1 - Access Account -</u>	Balance at 1/7/2008	\$ 178.31
<u>\$ 5 - Club Account -</u>	Balance at 1/7/2008	<u>\$ 486.57</u>
	<u>Total Assets as at 30.6.2008</u>	\$ 664.88

ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS Inc.
EPACRIS STUDY GROUP Plant profile

Epacris lanuginosa Labill.

lanuginosa = very woolly

Common names **Woolly Heath / Woolly-style Heath**

Distribution - Tasmania, Victoria, New South Wales

Epacris lanuginosa is a dwarf to small shrub, usually less than 1 m tall but sometimes growing to about 1.5 m in height. It has an erect growth habit with a spread of 30cm to 1 m.

The narrow green leaves are to 1.3 cm long and taper to a sharp point.

Flowering is mainly in spring but can commence in late winter and extend through to mid-summer when tubular white flowers to about 8 cm long are profuse in the leaf axils on the upper sections of the branchlets or in drumhead-like clusters at the ends of the branches. The floral tube is longer than the spreading lobes which produce an attractive starry display. A distinctive feature of this species is the style which is swollen in the middle third of its length and has a cluster of woolly hairs.

Eucalyptus paludosa is very closely related, but lacks the woolly hairs on the central swelling of the style.

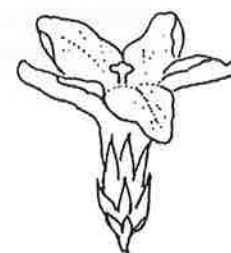
The fruit is a small capsule which splits to release the fine seed when ripe.

Illustrations © Alice Talbot
 from 'EPACRIS' -
 booklet prepared by Alice Talbot and
 The Australian Plant Study Group.

Photograph © Rodger Elliot



Underside of leaf



Detail of flower



Ovary, woolly style,
and stigma

***Epacris lanuginosa* Labill.**

Distribution

Epacris lanuginosa occurs usually in most to wet heathlands and heathy forest-woodland, from near sea-level to about 1000m alt.

It is widespread in Tasmania and in Victoria plants occur mainly in the southern areas, including western Victoria, the Otway ranges, Wilson's Promontory and east Gippsland. This species also has a very limited occurrence in the Southern Tablelands region of New South Wales.

Cultivation

Epacris lanuginosa is not commonly cultivated, although plants were grown in England during the 19th century. They are obtainable today from a limited number of nurseries specialising in native or indigenous plants.

Plants require moist soils and in cultivation tend to prefer situations with relatively good drainage. They are best suited to situations with dappled shade or just morning sun and can be cultivated in containers as well as in the garden.

Pruning after flowering is recommended to produce bushy plants with ongoing vigour and good flower production in the following season.

Propagation

Epacris lanuginosa is cultivated mainly from cuttings, with barely firm young growth providing best results. Plants can also be grown from seed, although this method of cultivation is only rarely used.

Epacris lanuginosa Labill.

The botanist who described and named *Epacris lanuginosa* was Jacques Julien Houton de Labillardiere.

Labillardiere was born in France on 28th October 1755 and died in Paris on 8th January 1834. He studied both medicine and botany and spent 18 months in England studying exotic plants, during which he became acquainted with Joseph Banks. In 1791 he was selected to go on the French expedition under Bruny d'Entrecasteaux and on this voyage he collected some 4000 botanical specimens, including material from south-western Australia and Tasmania. His name is sometimes written as La Billardiere and the genus of *Billardiera* commemorates his contribution to botanical research. He also named *Epacris heteronema*, *Epacris impressa* and *E. myrtifolia*.

Space for additional notes on *Epacris lanuginosa*

Recording the flowering times of *Epacris* species

This page is for recording the flowering times of *Epacris* in own garden, or in community gardens, botanic gardens, bushland areas or other sites in your region.

There is no deadline for sending the information to the EPACRIS STUDY GROUP. It is an ongoing project, with results being recorded on computer as received. The information received will also provide a reference for comparisons relating to any climate change in the future.

October, 2008IF INSUFFICIENT SPACE PLEASE USE EXTRA PAGE

Date

_____ <i>Epacris</i> _____	In BUD <input type="checkbox"/>	In FLOWER <input type="checkbox"/>	Flowering finishing <input type="checkbox"/>
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November, 2008

Date

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December, 2008

Date

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January, 2009

Date

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February, 2009

Date

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March, 2009

Date

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April, 2009

Date

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Epacris Study Group - Membership information.

Membership of The Epacris Study Group and other Study Groups of the Australian Plant Society / Society for Growing Australian Plants is available to all members of the A.P.S. / S.G.A.P.

Membership of any Australian state group, not necessarily that of the area in which you reside, entitles you to membership of one or more study groups.

You can join the EPACRIS STUDY GROUP for just \$5.00 for 1 year or \$10 for 2 years renewable in June. Overseas subscriptions - \$10 Aust. p.a.

Membership renewal date is shown on address label of current Study Group members.

Memberships should be sent to P.O. Box 655, Heathmont 3135.

Please make cheques payable to The Epacris Study Group.

Sender:

EPACRIS STUDY GROUP

P.O. Box 655, Heathmont Vic. 3135