

EPACRIS STUDY GROUP

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NEWSLETTER

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Greetings to all Epacris Study Group members.

It seems strange to start a plant study group newsletter with comments on the weather, but this is certainly something of major significance to many of us at the present time, and also of major significance to our bushland and garden plants.

Apart from our many personal concerns an aspect which can be extremely valuable is to keep a record of happenings in our gardens at this time. I recall a situation in California some years ago when a gully planted out with Australian plants became flooded following a break in a dam wall. Many plants were actually under water for some time, including a large plant of *Grevillea* 'Audrey' which nobody expected would survive - but it and several other species proved everybody to be wrong in their predictions. The garden is part of a University of California Santa Cruz campus and Arboretum and the results of the situation were fully monitored and recorded. Extremely valuable information. If you are ever visiting California the Arboretum at U.C. Santa Cruz is well worth a visit.

On glancing through past copies of the EPACRIS STUDY GROUP Newsletter it is interesting to note that our Study Group will be 20 years old next year, having been commenced in 1992 with Ron Crowden as Leader and Dick Burns as Secretary/Treasurer.

I have had the pleasure and privilege of doing the Newsletters and being the official leader of the group since 1998 but I am now wondering whether there is now another member who may like to take over this role in the future. If so I would be very pleased to hear from you by email at rgelliot@optusnet.com.au or at the address above.

We had intended to include a Profile Page on the family Ericaceae in this Newsletter, but this has now been deferred. It will certainly be included in a future issue.

I hope you enjoy this Newsletter and that 2011 is a very good year for you and your *Epacris*.

Warm greetings, and happy gardening,

Gwen E.

News & Notes

Epacris Study Group - Membership information.

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

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.

Your membership renewal date is shown on address label of current Study Group members. Please make cheques payable to The Epacris Study Group and send to P.O. Box 655, Heathmont 3135.

Welcome to new Study Group member .

A very warm welcome is extended to **Susan Bell** of **Mornington** Vic. who is a member of the recently re-formed Mornington Peninsula group of the Australian Plant Society. This regional group had been in recess for some time but is now once again up and running, due in part to the efforts of former ASGAP Study Group Co-ordinator Philip Robinson.

If you live in the Mornington Peninsula region or know of other residents there with an interest in Australian Plants we're sure this group would warmly welcome new members to join in their activities. Philip can be contacted on 03) 5975 2914 or by email at - prob6058@bigpond.net.au

A gardener with a passion for EPACRIS

Study Group member, **Shirley Carn** of **Monbulk** Vic. is a true *Epacris* enthusiast. She grows a wide range of species in her garden and even organises her opening for Australia's Open Garden Scheme and other festivals so that the *Epacris* will be at their best for her open days. For those who missed visiting the garden during 2010 it was included in 'The Best of Gardening Australia' Summer TV series on ABC TV in January 2011.

Shirley's garden was featured in the magazine *Gardening Australia*, January 2011 when a section on 'Favourite Plants' specifically mentioned *Epacris*, including *Epacris impressa*, *Epacris pulchella*, and *Epacris purpurescens*.

Shirley commented that she has found *Epacris impressa* needs protection from hot sun so she provides shelter by planting it among *tetratheca*, *wahlenbergia* and native grasses. When it finishes flowering she cuts it back to ground level so it reshoots, forming more flowering stems.

Other heaths in Shirley's collection include *Dracophyllum secundum*, species of *Leucopogon* and *Woolisia*.

Colour photographs of a white-flowered *Epacris impressa* and also the pink double-flowered form from the Grampians Vic., added to the appeal of the article.

Our Study Group even scored a mention, with Shirley stating that she "loves sharing her garden with others and groups often visit, including the Australian Plants Society and the Epacris Study Group". The last visit by our Study Group was in September 2009, as reported in our Newsletter No. 28.

Thanks Shirley for being such a great ambassador for *Epacris*.

News & Notes

A very welcome item from DICK BURNS in Tasmania -

EPACRIDS AT THE TASMANIAN ARBORETUM

Many Australian Plants members have been to the Tasmanian Arboretum or may have read my article in the *Australian Plants Journal* (vol 23, no. 185, Dec 2005, p 167 onwards). If you haven't heard of it, the Arboretum is sited in a lovely valley on the Don River, south of Devonport. It is cared for voluntarily by its members. Collections of trees have been sourced world-wide, but the largest collection is contained within the Tasmanian Section, probably the largest single display of Tasmanian species.

I took over as Tasmanian curator on my retirement at the end of 1998 and have managed to bring together complete collections of Tasmanian conifers and several genera of flowering plants including our thirty *Eucalyptus* species, all *Allocasuarina* species, *Leptospermum* species, *Spyridium* species, *Westringia* species, etc. I obtain the plants from four Tasmanian nurseries that specialise in Tassie flora, from the local APST North West Group and from field trips. I generally avoid short-lived or herbaceous species.

One genus I have not yet focussed on for full representation is *Epacris*: the difficulty has been both availability and my concentrating on larger-sized plants. *Epacris impressa* (a pink form occurs naturally) and I have planted other colour forms in the Heathland Bed.

Other established species are:

E. barbala, *E. grandis*, *E. gunnii*, *E. marginata*, *E. moscaliana*, *E. myrtifolia*, *E. petrophila* and *E. stuartii*. In the nursery hardening up for next year are *Epacris curtisiae* and *E. paludosa* from the Leven River. With 28 species listed for Tasmania, I need to lift my game a bit don't I!

Other epacrid genera in the Section are *Acrothamnus*, *Archeria*, *Cyathodes*, *Leptecophylla*, *Leucopogon*, *Monotoca*, *Pentachondra*, *Sprengelia* (including the recently recognised *S. propinqua*), and all four species of *Trochocarpa*.

The major planting for 2010 was the establishing of Richea Grove which contains all species bar *Richea alpina*. This year I also decided to try a means for growing the wonderful Climbing Heath, *Prionotes cerinthoides*, but for once neglected to put guards around the plants (I thought I'd be safe; one is growing in the open at the caretaker's cottage). Our resident paddymelons or rabbits were pleased with the new flavour sensation - not even a stalk was left. I'll try again next year.

When you come to visit the Tasmanian Arboretum, make sure you let me know. If it so happens that I can't get there to guide you around, a Tassie Section plant list for each bed is available at the kiosk.

Dick Burns

We also received a lovely note from **Malcolm Reed** of **Epping** NSW, which included news of the death of his much loved plant of ***Woollisia pungens***.

Woollisia is closely related to *Epacris*, and Malcolm has previously indicated that he felt we should regard it as an 'honorary member' of *Epacris* for our Study Group purposes.

The two genera are certainly very close botanically, so we fully understand Malcolm's love of his *Woollisia* and sadness at its loss. There are now white, pale pink and deep pink flowered forms available from nurseries, so there will be a choice of colours for any replacement.

Woollisia pungens was previously included in *Epacris* as ***Epacris pungens***.

News & Notes

A new species of EPACRIS

The EPACRIS STUDY GROUP has recently received the exciting news that a previously undescribed *Epacris* has been found in the Blue Mountains National Park west of Sydney.

It is a shrubby plant growing to 1.5m high and has white flowers in spring to early summer.

We look forward with much anticipation to its official acceptance as a new species, and will bring you further details as the work involved comes to its conclusion.

Some very long-flowering Epacris

While some species of *Epacris* have a relatively short flowering period others are renowned for flowering for almost 12 months of the year. *Epacris longiflora* the New South Wales Fuchsia Heath is certainly one of these.

There are also some other species which members have been recording as flowering for extremely long periods and not all are widely known in cultivation, but undoubtedly should be.

One such species is *Epacris calvertiana* from New South Wales. Records noted in Victoria list this cream-flowered species as flowering from the start of January through to the end of December with recordings in each month. The pink-flowered *Epacris calvertiana* var. *versicolor* has also been recorded in every month of the calendar year.

The form of *Epacris gunnii* from east of Melbourne also has an extremely long flowering period and the only months for which we do not have a record of plants being in flower are October and November. This may perhaps be human error rather than the plants not flowering in spring - we will make sure we check these months closely in 2011.

Thanks to all members who are keeping a record of flowering times. I'm sure we will be able to collate some very interesting information from the data received.

Epacris calvertiana



Epacris calvertiana var. *versicolor*



Australian Native Plant Society (Australia) Inc.
Special PROFILE PAGE

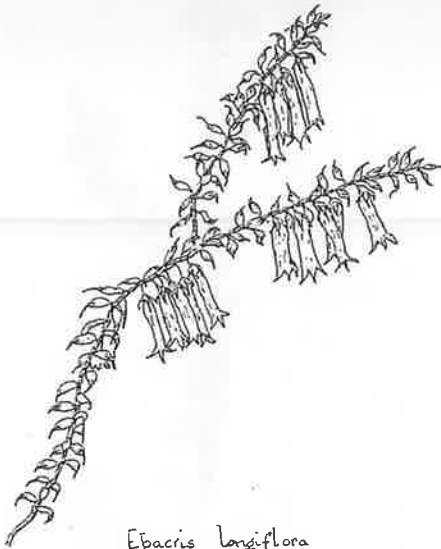
A tribute and heartfelt thanks to BILL GUNN

On a very sad note we have unfortunately had to say farewell to Bill Gunn of Ocean Grove Vic., who died in December at the age of 95. With his strong Scottish accent and keen sense of humour Bill was a real Australian plant enthusiast, Many will have met Bill and Doris at state and national conferences of the Australian Plant Society.

In 1999 Bill generously provided the Epacris Study Group with a bundle of *Epacris* illustrations which he had prepared for possible use in our Newsletters.

They have certainly been used in many of our special Profile Pages over the years, and we will be forever grateful to Bill for this contribution.

A selection of reduced versions of some of Bill's illustrations are included here on this special Tribute Page.



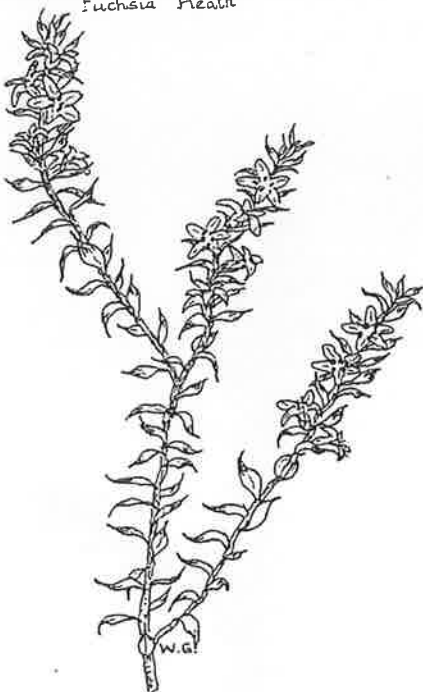
Epacris longiflora
"Fuchsia Heath"



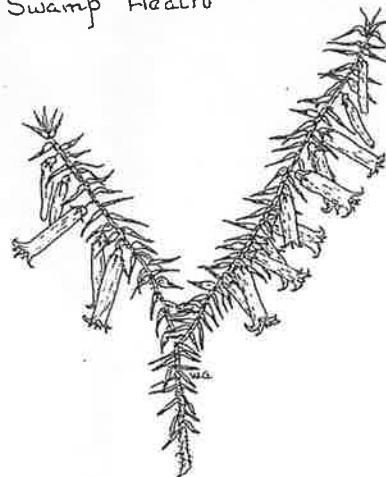
Epacris paludosa
"Swamp' Heath"



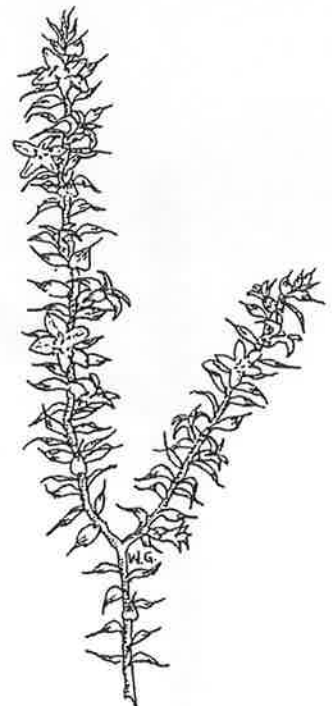
Epacris gunnii
"Gunn's Heath"



Epacris stuartii
"Stuart's Heath"



Epacris reclinata
"Sandstone Heath"

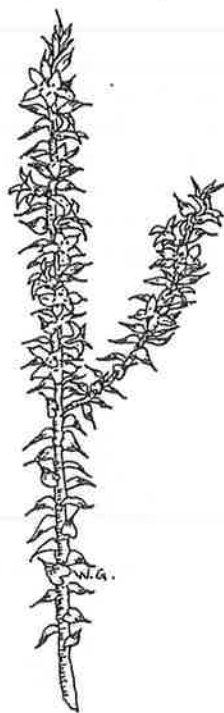


Epacris pulchella
"Coral Heath"

Special PROFILE PAGE - *Epacris* illustrations by BILL GUNN



Epacris obtusifolia
"Blunt-leaf Heath"



Epacris microphylla
"Coral Heath"



Epacris tasmanica



Epacris lanuginosa
"Woolly Heath"



Epacris virgata
"Tamar Heath"



Epacris calvertiana

