

EREMOPHILA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER NO. 10 MAY 1978

Recently I had the opportunity to visit some of our members in South Australia, namely Trevor Barr, Ken Warnes, Robin Trevilyn, Ray Isaacson, Kaye Bartlett, Flora and Reg Mason, Tom Loffler, Joe Mack, and Len Richardson, and in Victoria, Bert Curtis, and Russ Wait. This meant covering quite a few kilometres but it was well worthwhile. I probably saw as many *eremophilas* as one would see on a field trip; certainly the range of plant forms was greater.

It was pleasing to see what is in cultivation. Many were single plants but well on the way to producing sizable bushes for future cuttings. All those visited indicated a willingness to supply cutting material from their mature plants to members who call, or make some other arrangement.

Judging by the welcome one receives, I am sure that people are interested in visits from others. I think all of us should make some effort to visit one another. It provides an opportunity to talk, exchange cuttings or plants (where permitted), and discuss techniques on growing and propagating. It is also in the interests of the Study Group if you can get together in regional groups. Most of us enjoy inspecting native gardens so there is often an extra bonus added to these visits. It is sometime since Ken Warnes received reports on plants in cultivation and it is obvious we must rectify this matter in the near future.

G.N.

LETTERS

by Geoff Needham

Quite a few letters have been received since the last Newsletter. Comments on the proposed data sheet were the main item mentioned, which is what we wanted. These suggestions have been noted and included in the data sheet where applicable. There were further reports of cuttings collected in 1977 having struck; some of these cuttings are still sitting in the frames but we can always expect results even a year later. It does seem that some varieties have definite periods of growth: E230 *E. pantonii*, E337 *E. "purpurascens"*, E346 *E. virens*, and E363 *E. "lacerata"*, were all collected in 1976 and struck in the last months of 1977.

Two letters contained references to a mauve and a violet form of *E. maculata*. I have heard of another sighting by a traveller as to a purple-flowered form, but have yet to see a specimen. If anyone has such a plant, would they send a pressing to Bob Chinnock for verification of the species?

Mention has been made of collecting by some members. At all times State laws should be observed and where necessary permits obtained from the appropriate authority. In W.A. all plants in National Parks, and on Crown Land, are protected. To collect cuttings from Crown Land, permission must be sought from the Conservator of Forests, Forests Department, 54 Barrack Street, Perth, Western Australia 6000.

CONSERVATION

by Geoff Needham

Many or all of us are conservation minded and I have often thought about the aspect of cuttings being taken from the bush. This is unimportant when there are many plants to choose from, but when that particular species is very much in the minority, is it detrimental to the plant? One of our collectors was recently in a position to exactly identify such a bush in the wild from which cuttings were taken in 1976. His words were: 'It was the best looking bush in the area'. With discretion in our collections we may actually be helping to conserve the plants in the wild. Of course, the other aspect is that if the area has been razed by fire or grazed by animals then they could be saved for posterity by our collecting and propagating them.

GRAFTING

by Bob Chinnock

Last season I attempted to graft a number of eremophilas (9 species) onto Eremophila maculata (Queensland form) with negative results. The stock plants had been grown in pots for a year during which time lateral shoots had been removed. The stem thickness at the time of grafting was 8–10 mm. The graft type used was whip and tongue, and the plants were bound with plastic grafting tape, and in some cases VASELINE was added to completely seal any exposed parts. For about a month all the grafted plants remained quite healthy, but then gradually they shrivelled and died.

One of the main causes of failure, I believe, was the grafting stock. Although I had removed all the lateral shoots that had developed, when the plants were grafted the E. maculata stock immediately started to throw out new shoots. Although these were removed, more continued to appear. Shoots even developed in the upper parts of the stock near the grafted plant, and even under the tape.

It is obvious that another species must be used. Has anyone else tried to graft eremophilas? If you have, please let us know through the newsletter of your success or failure.

SOME NORTHERN COLLECTIONS

by Ray Isaacson

The following Eremophila spp. were collected on the 1976 and 1977 visits to Queensland and the Northern Territory:

Eremophila cordatisepala. Low shrub to 50 cm, bushy with grey leaves, mauve flowers, and cordate sepals. Collected on the Dajarra to Mt. Isa Road and also 6 km north of Tobermory Station. Grows on rocky slopes and hills. I have struck several from each year, but have managed to pot only a single plant. Doing well in the garden. Can be identified by the sepals and could not be confused with any other Eremophila growing in these areas.

Eremophila obovata var. glabriuscula. Low dense shrub 30–50 cm high, spreading about twice as wide as high, with bright green leaves (at least after rain), and mauve flowers. Collected 18 km south of Tobermory Station, growing on hard clay flat. I have managed to strike several cuttings and the plants are doing well in the garden. I believe it will be one of the best small eremophilas. It grows in the adjacent areas of Queensland, but may not extend very far into the Northern Territory.

Eremophila tetraptera. Collected on Diamantina Lakes Station, Queensland. Grows to 3 m, with leaves mid-green and fleshy, bunched on the ends of branchlets. The showy red flowers are also on the end of the branchlets. I have not been able to strike cuttings but have raised several from seed. The seed used was collected this season. Plants are small, but looking healthy in the garden. Possibly one of the best larger eremophilas.

Eremophila calycina. Raised from very fresh seed, the fruits appearing to be immature. These were collected in 1976 and planted when stripped from cutting material. We collected seed of the same degree of maturity in 1977. These were stripped from the trees and not planted until we arrived home 14 days later. Results were nil. It may be necessary to sow fruits that are so green immediately on stripping from plant.