Association of Societies for Growing Australian Plants EREMOPHILA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER No. 103

March 2012

THANKYOU TO ALL WHO HAVE PAID THEIR SUBSCRIPTIONS YOUR RECEIPT IS ENCLOSED OR HAS BEEN FORWARDED TO YOU

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SUBSCRIPTION RATE IS UNCHANGED AT \$5 PER YEAR - DUE JUNE EACH YEAR

THE RED DOT WILL APPEAR IN THE TOP RIGHT HAND CORNER OF THE NEXT NEWSLETTER IF PAYMENT FOR 2012/2013 IS DUE

I have been filled with good intent; however getting down to doing this newsletter has not been easy. Our life has been rather hectic since the end of the Conference and time has for all sorts of reasons slipped by.

The national conference was a great success, with over twenty members of the Study Group who registered attending the gathering to discuss matters relating to the Study Group.

I was most impressed with the contribution made by several of our South Australian members who, together with the regional Para Districts group here in South Australia, presented a magnificent display of eremophilas in the form of an emu, as well as many species in display tubes along with a fine selection of other than *Eremophila* species. This was a truly memorable display which was the subject of many photographs taken during the conference and commented about whenever registrants visited the cloisters of the school building for refreshment breaks. A report from Beverley Rice, one of the main organizers of this display, is printed below.

Ken Warnes invited registrants to visit his property at Owen on the Monday following the conference. This was a valuable experience for those who were able to attend and Ken is thanked for his hospitality. The schedule surrounding the conference was tight and unfortunately more would have attended had they not been booked on tours or had other commitments.

AUSTRALIAN PLANTS AWARDS

At the recent (October 2011) ANPSA Conference held in Adelaide, Australian Plants Awards (2011) were conferred on two members of the Eremophila Study Group for their contributions to the study & promotion of Australian Native Plants. Gwen Elliott AM received the Professional Award and Ken Warnes received the Amateur Award.

The citations were read to the audience by the Chairman of the ANPSA Awards Committee, Paul Kennedy. The two citations can be read on the ANPSA website and in print in the APS SA Region Inc, Journal – November 2011; Pp 241-244.

Eremophilas are but part of their contribution – they each have contributed extensively to the promotion of Australian Native Plants in general and have been most willing to pass on their extensive knowledge to others throughout the many years of involvement in local, regional and national organisations.

Congratulations to Gwen and Ken from members of the Eremophila Study Group.

FROM YOUR LETTERS

Ken Warnes, Owen, SA

While the winter of 2009 was not particularly wet there were some periods of continuous dampness. July in particular, recorded 21 wet days so there were long periods when the foliage was rarely dry. It was to be expected that there would be some damage but the northern form of *E. cordatisepala* from Dajarra, 60cm across, was the only direct loss. Despite complete clearance of the surrounding areas the branches gradually died back with no sign of shooting from any point. The southern form from Jundah was quite un-affected. Rather surprisingly *E. bowman* ssp. *latifolia*, which is superficially similar, suffered no damage. *Eremophila prostrata* could have been lost if I had not realised the problem and cleared the weeds back. Being totally prostrate and

growing in coarse red sand it would never have developed any resistance to competing foliage. The hybrids with *E. willsii* and *E. goodwinii* were quite OK.

Eremophila elderi, despite the open leggy habit, suffered collar rot wherever old leaves remained on the branches, with subsequent death of the branch. Shooting below the damage is unpredictable and the tip growth is generally unsuitable for propagation, so keeping this one in the collection is a constant battle. Some experimentation with pruning seasonal growth could provide the answer but any form of dense growth would be attacked. In the meantime it's a matter of rubbing off the old leaves and planting something bushy in front. As always E. undulatum died back very heavily and would struggle to survive a really wet winter. At least it's fairly easy to graft up new plants.

The woolly leaved species such as *E. fasciata*, *E. hygrophana*, *E. mackinlayi* ssp. spathulata and *E. warnesii* all suffered degrees of die-back, again with fungal attack below the new growth: most of these shoot quite well when pruned below the damaged section. I don't think some forms of *E. drummondii*, *E. racemosa*, *E. aureovisca* and *E. clarkei* liked the wet soil but they haven't died.

Other losses have been due to termite attack, the area is adjacent to old Sugar Gums which are a haven to them. A point of interest is that in grafted plants the attack has stopped when the *Eremophila* is reached, the *Myoporum* is eaten which fairly effectively kills the plant, but perhaps *E. mitchellii* is not the only species to have some levels of termiticide activity. I only realised this in conversation with Maree Goods who had made the same observation.

Phil Trickett & Catriona Bate, Ulladulla, NSW

We have grown eremophilas very successfully in Canberra but have now moved to the South Coast of NSW, Conditions are a bit more challenging with high rainfall (around 1200mm a year) and rich volcanic soils. We are trialling a number of *Eremophila* species (grafted and on their own roots), so hopefully we will be able to provide some useful information on growing eremophilas on the south east coast.

QUEENSLAND GROUP GET TOGETHER

Thank you and the committee for organizing an enjoyable Eremophila meeting in Adelaide. During discussions with Victorian and South Australian study group members at the conference, I was asked to arrange a study group get-together in Queensland. I have discussed this with members of the Queensland group and we have chosen the weekend of the 21st and 22nd of July.

The get-together will be centred round Toowoomba. The first venue will be at 10 Patrick St, Lowood, at the home of Peter and Carol Bevan. After lunch we will travel to the home of Laylee and Steve Purchase at 41 Rocklyn St, Toowoomba, where we will have a garden visit, followed by a barbecue and after dinner talk. Toowoomba has an abundance of accommodation from caravan parks to motels. On the Sunday, we will visit several other members in the Toowoomba area.

On the Monday, those members who wish to will set out on a trip to see some eremophilas in the wild, stopping to see gardens at Chinchilla and Roma. We will then travel as far west as Charleville, before turning south to Cunnamulla. From here, members will find their own way home. Those heading back towards Toowoomba can visit the Goondiwindi botanical gardens to see the eremophilas there.

I hope as many members as possible can join us. My contact details for anyone requiring more information are as follows:

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Jan Glazebrook

Colin Jennings Leader, ASGAP Eremophila Study Group, 4 Kinnaird Crescent, Highbury SA 5089 cje97694@bigpond.net.au

THE EMU

As a member of the Eremophila Study Group in South Australia I thought other members who were not at the 2011 National Conference in Adelaide might like to read of how we tried to put Eremophilas in the 'lime light' at the conference.

Some of the Study Group members realized how busy the Leader, Colin Jennings was going to be in organizing the conference let alone organizing an Eremophila Study Group display .I approached Colin with the offer to put a display up on behalf of the Study Group. I did warn him that it would be 'different'. I had an idea of a 'play on words' Eremophila - Emu Bush! Hence the emu idea was formed. Ken organized a tiered display stand of *Eremophila* flower cuttings with the help of members from the Para Districts group.





I persuaded a friend to make the metal frame, which Robert started one Sunday evening, it was completed the following morning without any planned drawing! Some metal, long nails, artistic ability, an oxy torch and some black paint! [Robert is a mechanic, but very talented when it comes to making metal objects.] The skeleton was a 'life-size' emu, complete with knobbly knees. [The legs were detachable.]

Rosie his wife, a floral artist and APS member, placed 25 floral art bricks saturated in water and flower preservative over the skeleton, held in place by the exerted long nails and florist tape. With a sharp knife we shaped the neck and head. Wrapped the 'beast' completely in glad wrap and then proceeded to decorate the emu skeleton with *Eremophila* flowers.

For the body we used mainly *E. dempsteri* and *E. saligna*, long arching branches were used for the 'feathers'; the neck and the head consisted of individual flowers with all green leaves removed and cut to around 10cm long. These had to be from eremophilas which had strong flower stems; such as *E. maculata*, [many different forms] *E. lucida*, *E. duttonii* [green calyx], *E. nivea*, *E. glabra* 'carnosa', *E. cuneifolia*, trying to keep groups of colours together, reds, pinks and purples for the head and moving down the neck to blues.

We had little idea as to which flowers we were going to use, as all my eremophilas had flowered three weeks earlier than usual due to the unseasonable rains we had in February 2011. I had a great team of helpers, Sue & Bev had the tasks of removing all the leaves and cutting the florets into 10cm lengths, Ross had the job of 'gopher' when I wanted "more" [which was often] he went off to find yet another bucket of cuttings from around

the garden. Ian was the 'cleaner' [we made quite a mess] he was also the 'coffee maker'. Rosie worked on the body and I worked on the head and neck. It really was a joint effort. When we had finished there was water dripping out of the emu — copious amounts! Thank goodness for a tiled floor and many old towels.

The task to get the finished emu into the back of the covered ute was another story as was the unloading when we arrived at the Conference centre at Westminster: but after riding for 100km 'he' was successfully carried in and installed by four strong men! Then arranging some hessian on the ground covered with sticks, leaves, and rocks, we had finished! I had wanted to make a nest of emu eggs from *Eremophila* flowers but time didn't permit that to happen maybe another time another place!



So if you want to have some fun, make an Eremophila Emu to promote the genus.

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