AUSTRALIAN NATIVE PLANTS SOCIETY [AUSTRALIA]

SPECIAL
Eremophila Newsletter

LEADERSHIP ROLE

We have been advised by Myrnie Jennings that Colin is seriously ill and is in hospital and possibly will be for some time. Colin has expressed the wish for his resignation as the Eremophila Study Group Leader to be accepted.

We have greatly appreciated Colin's role as Leader of the Eremophila Study group for nearly thirty years. In this time the numbers have increased to over 150 members.

It has been an ongoing commitment by Colin to collate, publish and distribute a quarterly [more or less] newsletter to all members. No doubt Myrnie took an active role in helping Colin. On your behalf we thank them both for the years they have dedicated to the publication of the Newsletter. We all wish Colin a speedy recovery from his present illness.

We believe the cohesion of the Study Group is the Newsletter as we all come from diverse areas in Australia [and overseas].

Ken Warnes & Bev Rice

The newsletter can only function if all Study Group Members submit articles for publication to the editor.

Volunteer to be the Eremophila Study Group Leader and/or Newsletter Editor

To express your interest in the above role

or for further information

Please contact nevpage@bigpond.com

Mailing address:

66 Valley View Lane, Womboin. A.C.T. 2620

Contacts

Interim Newsletter Editors

- **Ken Warnes, Owen S.A.**

Address: PO Box 47

Owen S.A. 5460

e-mail: **kwarnes@rbe.net.au**

'phone: **[08] 85 286 420**

- **Bev Rice,**

58 Oaklands Rd.

Dutton. S.A. 5356

e-mail

mayor@ activ8.net.au

'phone **08 85640 357**

NATIONAL STUDY GROUPS CO-ORDINATORS

Neville & Lesley Page

Address:

66 Valley View Lane

Womboin. A.C.T. 2620

e-mail:

nevpage@bigpond.com

PLEASE NOTE:

It has come to our notice that a number of Eremophila Study Group members on the name list are not financial members of their State body.

It is essential that you are a financial member of your State body to be a legitimate Study Group Member.

This may be an appropriate time to consider your wish to continue your membership

If you are not a current member you are not covered in any way by insurance in case of an accident or any kind.

We have been advised that this may preclude you from attending any future functions

Accordingly this may be the last newsletter you receive!

If you no longer wish to be a member of the Study Group please advise the editors of your intent.

Please forward any newsletter articles which you have submitted in 2014 that have not been published to either of the acting editors for publication in the next newsletter. We have been unable to obtain this information and someone may be wondering what has happened to their previously submitted article.

Please be patient with the temporary editors and we will endeavour to collate as much information as possible to pass on to the new Leader &/or new Editor.

At this stage we do not have a list of financial members, but we are looking into all of these details and will keep you informed of our progress.

As it has not been possible to retrieve all the information required from Colin's computer it is necessary to update the records which have been forwarded to us

This especially concerns current financial records and a decision may have to be made that all members will be treated as new members and any past pre payments may disappear in the system

Currently there is a good balance in the Bank so there is time to resolve this issue

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM ENCLOSED AND RETURN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO THE ADDRESS SUPPLIED. THIS INFORMATION WILL BE FORWARDED TO THE NEW LEADER/EDITOR.

SUMMER SEEDLINGS JANUARY 2015

A combination of storms and steady rain amounting to 85mm over a four day period, commencing on 7th January 2015, raised speculation of a mass germination of Eremophila seedlings, in particular the more northern species. Sure enough, the first seedlings appeared after only 3 days and continued for about a week until the surface dried out.

Prior experience has left me with the knowledge that leaving them in situ results in the death of the majority so after 7 days I began transplanting into 25mm tubes. I found that at this early stage the majority were only exposed cotyledons emerging from a half buried drupe with the radical still not emerged. (The slower emergence of the life sustaining radical may explain why so many die off.) At present I have tubed up 160 and lost 9 in the process although I expect more will die. They are liable to damp-off if potted too deep or kept too wet so it's an exacting process. There's 37 labels and although some would be duplicates there's a good range of species.

I first looked for strongylophylla as it was by the gate. The parent plant was dead but the remaining seed bank had germinated well following big rains of last Summer. Some 35-40 were counted in a short time, cleared of the mass of germinating weeds and marked with a stick. This is my normal method on the initial search. On to the related hygrophana, one which germinates regularly. Yes, good numbers again. Clear and mark. "I wonder if any others in the hygrophana group will have germinated ?" Sure enough, fasciata. warnesii, aff hygrophana Arkaroo RangeN.T., mackinlayi ssp mackinlayi, aff mackinlayi (straggly habit, gold tomentum), mackinlayi ssp spathulata,, variations in hygrophana that may be un-named species, virtually everything in the Section Hygrophanae.

There were seedlings of several plants I have lost and I can only hope that they survive and come true to type. jucunda ssp jucunda, simulans ssp simulans, goodwinii ssp goodwinii, goodwinii ssp ecapitata, aff acrida x hughesii ex Rawlinson Range are some that come to mind. It's a long way to go before they are back in the ground and it will be a great interest to monitor the progress and speculate on the genealogy of many of them because there are bound to be hybrids, based on past experience. In what I call "The Cottage Block" I counted over 50 hygrophana around one plant, I have left the lot for now but I may have to take my 4 year old Grand-daughter for a session of "pots". She is with her family on post- harvest holidays and I received a very rebuking look when I visited and told her that I had potted 160 plants in her absence. Molly considers doing "pots" as very much her domain in my nursery.

Some of last year's seedlings are still in the holding pots and showing distinct signs of hybridisation. The aforementioned strongylophylla has 3 plants to 15cm, only one has the correct leaves but they are bright yellow whereas the parent was grey. One clearly has macdonellii (never trust your neighbour) as it is in bud and the calyx is a united cup at the base while the other has the look of fasciata in its make-up. The three left in situ with a dripper to maintain them have only one that looks right, the other two have that fasciata look with narrow leaves and upright habit. So that's one reason why I potted 20 this time and left the rest for now. (Perhaps someone may have potted them by the time you read this.) fasciata and warnesii are two that may need cross pollination, but mackinlayi forms weren't far away and would probably be compatible. One of last year's sturtii is quite different to the others, I can't think what that would have crossed with but the related succinea is only a few metres away and some hybrid vigour may be showing up. Again time will tell, drought, flood and frost permitting.

Why do I pot on so early? Because if left the attrition rate is very high and already, after only two weeks, the surface is so hard and dry that losses are occurring from lack of moisture and weed competition. Also it would be impossible to mow and spray if they were just left. Where to look for them? Generally around and just outside the dripline of the plant seems the best spot. If moisture is marginal the South East side seems best, I assume it stays damper, but with this rain that was not the case. Bev Rice tells me she can't find any seedlings despite having the same rain. I'll have to try and change that on Friday when I visit to finalise this Information letter. Bev surmises that the softer surface soil in my block allows the drupes to settle deeper in the soil whereas in her hard clay they stay on top and dry out too quickly. Could be. Most of my seedlings are where there is also a mass of weeds, any scalded hard surfaces have no weeds and no seedlings. Also my plants are older and where this mass germination has occurred most plants would be at least 5 years old. I have found nothing under younger plants.

What to look for. It seems that the cotyledons on Eremophilas have a fairly uniform shape regardless of size. They are the shape of a blunt spear-head, bright green and visually hairless. The stem may be up to 10mm in length. Once seen, never forgotten. Once the radical emerges from the drupe it rapidly elongates and this is another reason that I pot on early.

So good spotting and label well as you may not recognise the plant that eventuates.

Ken Warnes. January 2015

From Bev Rice

Dutton, S.A.

A few thoughts on propagation and pruning of Eremophila

PROPAGATION:

After seeing one of our members at our 'Sticky Beak' weekend last September displaying Preforma Plugs in a Cell Tray for propagation, I used this method in late 2013 and summer 2014 with a good success rate. Not knowing what to place under the tray - I placed each cell tray on a bed of damp coir peat in a well washed broccoli box, made my usual 'window' with a opened-out green 'keep fresh' plastic bag stapled securely on the cut out lid to form a plastic window to fit firmly on the top of the box. [Another grower suggested using vermiculite as a medium rather the coir peat under the trays] This method proved very good and saved space in my small shade house which is covered with 75% beige shade cloth.

Some Eremophila rooted within 3 weeks -

E. dichroantha: Showed good strong roots in 3 weeks.[100% strike]

E. nivea: Developed good healthy roots in 3 weeks and were transferred to tubes successfully.

E. scoparia: Rooted well with 85% taking.

I lost some rooted cuttings after potting the plugs into tubes, which was due to the 'soil mix' used. I thought I would 'cheat' and used ready mixed native potting mix from the nursery, this was not a good move as some of the rooted cuttings did not continue growing in this soil. [too acidic] So I will make up my own mix again with sharp sand and coir peat

E. dempsteri [white form]: Cuttings still sit sulking in the box now under plastic over winter, some cuttings are even flowering but not a root in sight!!

E. oppositifolia: Both creamy/yellow and purple forms rooted well transplanted into tubes grew roots down to the bottom of the pots but no top growth. Eight months later, at long last the top growth is starting to grow well, maybe they were rooted too late in the season. I will try again this year and put the cuttings in earlier, September/October.

E. viscida [cream form]: Rooted well but the pink form proved a challenge.

E. complanata: Usually one of the easiest to strike refused to root!!!!

E. glandulifera [bright lipstick pink form]: I am finding impossible to strike and impossible to graft as I only have one which is very spectacular when flowering which is several times during the year, I would love to be able to propagate more but so far I haven't had any success - has anyone else been able to propagating this lovely species? [the light pink variety seems much easier to propagate also the darker dusky pink form.] Perhaps I need to try in early Spring rather than Summer. Any suggestions from members?

E. drummondii [dwarf form]: Appears to root readily in winter provided the covered box is in the winter sun – this was done last winter 2013 and into tubes not plugs and 50 cuttings resulted in 50 healthy plants.

[I have propagated E. drummondii [dwarf form] in summer with dismal results and not very healthy plants]

I reported in a previous newsletter that the rabbits did not eat E. drummondii - well, I have some news for you - the little beasts do eat off very young plants but not older well established plants. So what chemical changes take place in the species as it matures?

PRUNING:

E. purpurascens X alternifolia: about 2m tall with a few leaves at the top, it was ruthlessly pruned to the base [about 20cm] The plants are now a mass of new healthy growth about 50 – 75cm high.

E. complanata: I made the big mistake by not pruning back when quite young and dug two out recently which had become very unattractive and cannot be pruned successfully below the foliage.

E. 'Summertime Blue': This eremophila is better if pruned each season. I tried a hedge effect using this species but it becomes very bare from the ground to 30 – 40cm. and will not green up at the base of the plant.

I have recently pruned back individual bushes of this hybrid which I kept to about 75cm high but they were starting to get that 'leggy look' - I cut these bushes back to 20cm bare wood, watered them well and there are now good healthy shoots emerging.

E. drummondii - [dwarf form]: Makes a good low hedge keeping it pruned to shape or more sprawling if left unpruned. Does not appear to suffer from lack of air circulation when grown closely together, responds well to pruning sides and tops of plants to the size you prefer, 'greens up' from the base of the plants.

E. drummondii [upright form]: Can be pruned back to leafless little sticks but it does take 18months to recover fully from radical pruning.

E. alternifolia: Responded well to severe pruning back to large, old wood the same as E. maculata responds to severe pruning.

On a recent excursion we saw some E. oppositifolia which had three large stems cut to ground level along the roadside and there were healthy shoots emerging at the base of these large bushes.

E. psilocalyx: Normally I would never prune this one as it is usually a lovely dense well shaped bush, however having two in the 'wrong' place which had just got too big I pruned a good third off keeping the natural shape of the plant, plants are now flowering in profusion and look great.

There have been a series of bad frosts this winter and some of the known 'frost' tender eremophila were effected badly – E. 'Rainbow Gem' & E. 'Rainbow Beauty'. E. canaliculata, E. gilesii [Qld. form], E. accrescens, E. christophorii [white and blue forms]

All of the above mature plants will recover but several newly planted ones died. A number of small plants planted out in early Autumn died from too much water and too many frosts - mainly E. clarkei, E. georgei, E. oblonga, & E. drummondii [upright, large flowering form]

Mature specimens of E. dempsteri look magnificent at the moment being covered with masses of tiny flowers and have really responded to the unusually wet conditions.

E. coacta was hit by frost and I have cut this back to bare twiggy wood and it is showing new healthy shoots and young growth. E.acrida also appeared 'dead' but is reshooting from older wood. [both of these were in a sheltered spot but both were burnt by frost].

A rather unusual year – first too much rain followed by too many frost and now it is too dry! We are hard to please!

[Submitted Sept., 2014]