ISS 0811 - 529X

EREMOPHILA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER NO. 32

July 1985

Some correspondence from grower members has enabled us to bring out the mid-year newsletter on time. Much work has been done recently on grafting of eremophilas and on the various stock plants of new species which have resulted from this method. Many are now in gardens but it is early days yet to know the success of these new species so if you have any information on grafted plants growing under garden conditions please let us know. Good news - after hours of work the previous newsletters (1 - 30) have been revised, edited and are now in the hands of the typist. Many thanks are given to Val Love who has done an excellent job on this project. Just when it will be published is not known at this stage, it is to be sold through the South Aust. Region S.G.A.P. who are financing the printing of the collective newsletters.

Geoff. Needham

Grafting improvements

You may be interested in some of the results I have achieved with my grafting over the last couple of years.

Since the last article I wrote on cutting grafts (N.L. No. 29) I have also carried out many top wedge grafts with almost equal results cf. cutting grafts. The procedure is exactly the same except you cut your stock squarely off at the top before splitting it down the middle far enough to insert the wedge of the scion (Fig. 1).

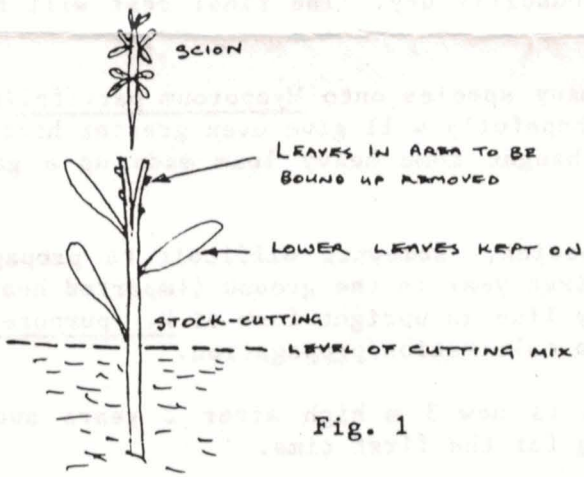

Fig. 1

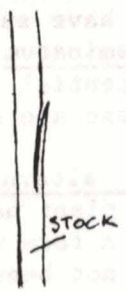

Fig. 2

The union is then bound up with tape - either plumbers teflon tape or pharmacutical Nescofilm - I use the latter these days and find it very good when cut into narrow strips. The cutting-graft is then placed into the propagating frame (or under glass etc.) as per usual.

An improvement on the method of doing cutting grafts is to nearly cut the stock cut just below the cambium layer and parallel with it - this makes this job far quicker and easier (Fig. 2).

By using the above methods I have had great success using both Myoporum parvifolium (semi-bushy form) and M. acuminatum as graft stocks.

Neil Marriott

Eremophila laanii (pink form)

I was doing some weeding recently, below the raised bed which contains some eremophilas, and to my surprise I came across an Eremophila. In July, 1983, I had planted E. densifolia in this spot, and though it had died. At first I

though this plant was E. densifolia, which must have re-shooted, but on comparing the leaves with that or an E. densifolia in a container, found this was not the case.

On closer examination this "new" Eremophila was in fact two branches - one is 45 mm high and the other 30 mm. Both are attached to a root 6 mm long and 1.5 mm thick.

In "Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants" Vol. 3, Elliot and Jones mention that the white-flowered form of E. laanii may sucker. If mine is a sucker from the pink-flowered form, is this unusual?

Norma Ali

Eremophilas in Sydney

For many years people were discouraged from growing eremophilas in Sydney due to so-called "climatic difficulties". I accepted this because whenever I planted them in my shallow Hawkesbury sandstone derived soils, they would grow for a short while as miserable scrawny specimens which were eventually a gardeners delight to remove.

My observations in gardens of other friends supported my theory even at the hypothesis stage, however, gardens with a heavy soil seemed to have eremophilas growing beautifully. One friend applied horse manure to a depth of 15 cms over the whole garden. Today the garden bears witness to some of the most magnificent specimens of Eremophila that I have seen anywhere. Alledgedly difficult species for Sydney thrive under a high fertiliser regime. Foliage has suffered no undue fungal problems, although, admittedly, the last few years have been unusually dry. The final test will be a high humidity, summer and wet year.

We have succeeded in grafting many species onto Myoporoum parvifolium and M. acuminatum (=M.montanum) which hopefully will give even greater horticultural potential to these plants. I bought some heavy loam made up a garden and these are the results:

E. alternifolia--A variable species, somewhat difficult to propagate. My plant has done well in its first year in the ground (imported heavy loam). A form which looks remarkably like an upright form of E. purpurescens has not been quite as amenable to cultivation/propagation.

E. bignoniiflora--This species is now 3 m high after 2 years and growing well. It flowered last spring for the first time.

E. biserrata--Grew well for a short time but died out.

E. bowmannii--2 forms are grown. Both have survived for 2 years on their own roots and flower periodically throughout the year. We have recently grafted these plants onto M. acuminatum.

E. calorhabdos--An extremely adaptable species which has done well in a variety of conditions. I have observed plants of this species over a period of many years growing well.

E. christophori--Plants of this species have tended to die out very quickly and we have grafted a few onto M. acuminatum in the hope that we can cultivate it more successfully.

E. clarkei--Plants have not done well on their own roots but grafted plants are doing well.

E. decipiens--A beautiful delicate species which has done well for a number of years. Reasonably reliable but it is sometimes short-lived for us.

E. densifolia--Not widely grown but there is one plant growing at a local Native Park Garden which is now 0.5 x 0.5 m.

E. denticulata--Although this species tends to become leggy it is very easy to grow and relatively long lived.

E. divaricata--A hardy species which has done well over a long period.

E. drummondii--The form from Kalgoorlie and the narrow leaf form both do reasonably well, although they are not long lived.

E. gibbifolia--This small species appears to be quite hardy and reliable. It has been grown for many years with some success.

E. gilesii--I grew this species for two years before it succumbed after a wet period. Grafted plants are being put down with better hopes for cultivation of this beautiful species which flowered more or less continuously the whole time I grew it.

E. glabra--All forms of this species have done well, though glabrous forms do better. Grey foliage forms perform reasonably though. The form from Murchison River is magnificent and will grow in sandy soils.

E. ionantha--A species new to cultivation but has done well so far.

E. laanii--I have grown this magnificent species with light pink flowers for many years. From my observation of other gardens it is reasonably hardy and long-lived.

E. latrobei--I grew this for two years and every time it rained it flowered. One day it rained so hard it flowered itself to death!

E. longifolia--A reasonably hardy and long-lived species.

E. macdonnelli--There are many forms of this desirable species, most of which have lived and flowered for a long period. One form, cutting grown, fell over early in its life and lived with only one root in the ground, for over 2 years. Grafted plants on Myoporum parvifolium have grown extremely well and flowered for many years. The grey foliage form however, is not reliable.

E. mackinlayi--This species does not do well for long. Our hopes rest with grafted plants.

E. maculata--By far the most commonly grown and reliable eremophila in the east. One form with masses of red flowers, collected at Nyngan is widely grown. The yellow, mauve, purple and orange forms also do well. The light pink white flowered form from Waikerie is also doing well, though still small. The form var. brevifolia, is doing surprisingly well. I had heard it was difficult but after a few early losses, we now have several plants doing well.

E. "nivea"--An extremely desirable species which grew well for about 3 years. A plant grafted on M. parvifolium is doing particularly well in my garden at the moment.

E. oppositifolia--My plant of this has flowered and grown well for over 4 years.

E. pantonii--Only young plants at present in my garden but other local gardens have this species doing very well.

E. polyclada--Widely grown and appreciated. This plant has grown well for me for over 3 years.

E. racemosa--Decidedly temperamental on its own roots, this spectacular species has recently been grafted with better hopes for the future. Plants usually grow to about 1 m and die suddenly, often blowing over

E. resinosa--This species grew well and flowered for a number of years.

E. santalina--Although difficult to propagate, once rooted and grown on this species grows fairly well, although it has not reached the size I have seen it attain in some inland gardens.

E. serpens--Reasonably easy to grow but tends to die out after a few years.

E. serrulata--This species has grown rapidly for us. Its a pity the flowers are so well hidden.

E. strongylophylla--My plant of this grew well for two years to about 1 metre but died after a wet period. Grafting may achieve better results.

E. "subteretifolia"--This species grew well for a long time but has tended to become sparse over the last two years. Given better conditions I feel this species will do well.

E. viscida--Plants of this species have done very well some have achieved a height of 1 m without any losses to date. Could this beautiful species be another successful one for the East?

E. weldii--A small, hardy species which has grown for over 4 years. Improved after pruning into a more attractive plant. Flowers every year.

E. lehmanniana (woollsiana)--This species grew so well we used it successfully as a rootstock. Plants eventually became very leggy and unattractive and had to be removed. The flowering in early years was most rewarding.

E. youngii--One of the most reliable and attractive of all species. This plant has actually achieved the status of "longevity". Many plants have been grown with scarcely any losses over a 10 year period.

Finally, I realise that range of plants we grow compared to other members of your study group is rather small and it has an inhibiting effect sometimes when we read of plants doing so well elsewhere. There is no doubt, that plants grow bigger, better and faster under ideal conditions. Nevertheless judicious pruning, fertilisation and understanding can produce acceptable horticultural specimens in Sydney Gardens. A word of thanks to members of the Study Group especially Geoff. Needham and also Ken Warnes who has been so willing to supply cutting material and flowers for exhibitions. As a result we have many more species under trial but no yet worthy of comment. In the ensuing years, a more comprehensive range may be seen and grown in the east. Plants under trial include:- E. battii, E. compacta, E. delisseii, E. dichroantha, E. duttonii, E. hillii, E. inflata, E. caerulea (merrallii), E. microtheca, E. neglecta, E. pterocarpa, E. purpurascens, E. subfloccosa.

Let us hope we can have trials of them all one day.

Peter Olde

Articles required for next Newsletter. Write on alternate lines please.

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Typed and printed at the Botanic Gardens, North Terrace, ADELAIDE, 5000