

Association of Societies for Growing Australian Plants
EREMOPHILA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER NO. 39

April 1989

Looking back over previous newsletters one realises how much study group members have contributed to the knowledge and recognition of eremophilas for use in the garden. The first newsletter was issued by Ken Warnes in September 1972 nearly 17 years ago, so some species have been under observation for a considerable length of time.

One of our local Councils has used eremophilas in the nature strips of chicanes. Selected by a Council officer with advice from a nursery, four species have been planted

<u>E. colorhabdos</u>	1.5 x 1.5 m high
<u>E. macdonnellii</u>	1.0 x 1.0 m high
<u>E. maculata</u>	1.0 x 1.0 m high
<u>E. glabra "tomentosa"</u>	2.0 x 1.5 m high

Although only 18 months old all have grown well and flowered heavily, planted in a loamy soil in an open sunny position and watered occasionally they appear to have thrived on fuel emissions from vehicles. Other Councils please note.

I have received a few flowering charts and hope for more. We do need this information.

Geoff. Needham

Raised Beds

by Frank Prichard

About twelve months ago I constructed a raised bed for Eremophila at Galore Hill Reserve. The soil where I had previously planted eremophilas was a silty loam which tended to become rock hard in summer and rather too wet in winter - hardly ideal. However, many species have done well. The raised bed consists of about 300 mm of fine windblown sand from a sandhill. After planting the surface was not mulched but covered completely with Rheem's "weed stop". This was 100% effective in stopping growth of weeds and has also been effective in retaining moisture. Despite a very dry summer the plants were only watered once and the majority have done remarkably well. A very wet period from May to August has had no adverse effects.

There are now 53 species and an additional 16 forms of some of these species. Many of these species have not been grown in this area before. I hope to add many more varieties in the coming twelve months.

Notes on Eremophila in Horsham

by Graham Lay

My interest in eremophilas stems originally from my membership of the Wimmera Growers of Australian Plants Society which meet monthly in Horsham or Wanacknabeal. Some growers are cultivating a wide range of eremophila species (up to about 100 species) and have acquired considerable expertise with the genus.

I live in Horsham City on a sub- $\frac{1}{4}$ acre block - frustratingly small when one considers the wealth of plant material one would like to grow, but don't have the space for. The soil is grey, Wimmera, moderately alkaline clay, sticky when wet, very hard when dry, average annual rainfall is 450 mm (18") little of which falls in summer.

Unless otherwise stated, the eremophilas I mention are growing north facing, in raised sandy-loamy beds overlying the original clay. I have mixed some of the clay in with the loam.

E. densifolia has been growing since 1978 and continues to grow well. It has reached a diameter of about $1\frac{1}{2}$ metres. E. maculata is also about 10 years old and is now about $2\frac{1}{2}$ metres or so tall. Its brick-red flowers always seem to be present and to which the New Holland honeyeaters are frequently attracted. The plant responds well to pruning which I find is necessary from time to time to maintain shape and to allow the car through the drive!

I have 2 plants of E. maculata var. brevifolia, both about 60 cm high and wide. With its brilliant magenta flowers and bluish foliage, it ranks with E. nivea as my favourite eremophila. Prior to 1982, I had a beautiful bush of E. nivea growing on the eastern side of the house (morning sun) in the original Wimmera clayey soil. It was about 1 metre x 1 metre and flowering beautifully, but the 1982 frosts killed it. Another specimen, since planted, is doing well against a north-facing fence in a fairly dry position.

E. glabra "carnosa" is a real "gem". A metre by a metre, it is always in flower and has looked good since it was put in 3 years ago. So too is E. weldii, a smaller plant, but more often than not in flower providing a pleasant blend of flower and foliage colour.

Both E. divaricata and E. brevifolia grew profusely in basically the original soil. However, I recently discarded these in order to make room for (in my view) other more attractive plants.

Another eremophila I no longer have at the moment is E. racemosa. The two plants I had grew to about a metre high, flowered beautifully for a couple of years, then succumbed to the wind. Does anybody know the answer here? Staking or what?

I have what I take to be a form of E. decipiens, about 60 cm high and wide after 18 months, with red flowers on S-shaped peduncles and with very narrow leaves about two centimetres long. It is doing well in a sunny position. A friend also has a very healthy specimen about 1 m x 1 m but shaded by a eucalypt for a good part of the day. (E. decipiens subsp. linearifolia/Ed.).

E. purpurascens, E. oppositifolia (cream flower) and E. scaberula have only been planted 18 months, and although growing OK, progress is slow and all three are shy to flower. They are in full sun on a raised bed. E. drummondii with thin, varnished leaves and about 40 cm high is a lovely plant, but I find branches tend to die back.

I have derived a great deal of pleasure from my E. youngii which has been growing in an easterly aspect now for 8 years. It is about $2\frac{1}{2}$ m tall and is almost constantly in flower. It is a haven for honeyeaters and on the infrequent occasions when the plant is not in flower, the grey foliage provides a pleasant contrast to the greens of other plants nearby.

E. maculata x duttonii is a plant I bought from Tony Clarke (Nellie's Nursery) in August 1987. I understand it is a natural hybrid from S.W. Queensland. I have it in full sun on a raised bed of sand-clay mix. It is kept tip-pruned, has received quite a bit of watering over summer (next to an area of lawn) and is doing very well indeed. At present it is about 60 cm x 60 cm but has produced very few flowers, which are magenta in colour. (Also occurs in the Northern Territory and New South Wales/Ed.).

Flower colour forms in Eremophila alternifolia

by Graham Lay

On a recent trip to WA (Spring 1988), I came across a beautiful deep-pink bush of E. alternifolia, about 2 m high, or perhaps a little less. Flowers were borne in profusion all over the plant. The shrub was growing about 4 kilometres south of Boulder, alongside the Kambalda road and adjacent to the Kalgoorlie Nickel Smelter. Close by (20 or 30 metres away) were other plants of the same species, some with pale pink flowers and still others with creamy-yellow flowers. There are lots of other (non-eremophila) species in the vicinity too - well worth a check if you happen to be travelling that way.

Eremophila hughesii Request

I have no colour slides of Eremophila hughesii so I wonder if anyone can help me?

This species grows from near Docker River west of Ayers Rock to about 100 km east of Wiluna. It is a tall spindly shrub with drooping pendulous branches and lilac flowers.

If you have photographed any eremophila with these features, especially close to the NT-WA border it is probably this species. Habit and sharp close-up photos of flowers and/or fruit are needed.

Editor

Leader: Geoff. Needham, 2 Stuckey Avenue, UNDERDALE, S.A. 5032

Editor: Bob Chinnock (C/- Address below)

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

