

Association of Societies for Growing Australian Plants
EREMOPHILA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER No. 44

August 1991

To those who have forwarded their subscriptions to the Study Group, thank you. If you have overlooked your contribution, please forward it to Colin as soon as possible.

This Newsletter is being prepared at the present time so that those who wish to attend the Workshop, can make the necessary arrangements. Included with this Newsletter is an information sheet dealing with the Workshop. Those members who are planning to attend are asked to return the tear off sheet to Colin by the end of August.

The letters I have received from many of our inland members tell of very dry conditions and in most cases the eremophilas are some of the few genera to be not greatly affected.

The Booklet is still available to anyone who wants a copy. At \$6, plus \$2.50 postage anywhere in Australia, it is excellent value, particularly to those who do not have the full set of Newsletters from number one. We still have plenty of copies left, let Colin know of your needs.

SEEDS & CUTTING MATERIAL

In response to the notes in the Newsletter number 43 I have had several requests for material. I will try to get cutting material to those who have asked for it later this month or in September, depending on conditions.

Each month I intend to list those members who wish to exchange material, who have want lists or who have material to offer other members. If you wish to make use of this let me know and I will include the details in the next available Newsletter.

I hope that members will also respond to the requests.

David Randall, a new member of the group, is offering members cutting material and fruits (seed). You may either call in or write to him. David's address is 25 William St, Cobram, Victoria 3644 (Phone — 058 721221).

FROM YOUR LETTERS

It is encouraging to hear from those to whom I sent cutting material last year. Although there are failures there are also some pleasing results. The direct result is that there are more of these plants now in cultivation than there were at the same time last year. Also the members who have had successes have passed their spare plants on to other enthusiasts.

Ted and Cynthia Beasley, Rushworth, Victoria, report that they have been getting rewarding results from grafting onto *Myoporum parvifolium*. Plants which have been successfully grafted include *E. bowmanii*, *E. eriocalyx*, *E. longifolia*, *E. mackinlayi*, *E. duttonii*, *E. obovata*, *E. pentaptera*, *E. strongylophylla*, *E. viscida* and *E. youngii*. They are now keen to try their hand at raising plants from seed.

Lyndal Thorburn and Tom Jordan, Queanbeyan, New South Wales have sent a 'newsy' letter which is extracted from below.

"Many of the furrer species got mouldy, including that lovely large white-flowered form. The ones that did well are:

<i>E. divaricata</i>	-	100% strike rate
<i>E. barbata</i>	-	close to 100%
<i>E. brevifolia</i>	-	about 50%
<i>E. miniata</i>	-	100%
<i>E. gibbifolia</i>	-	almost 100%
<i>E. weldii</i>	-	100%

We have planted out some of all of these and they are still alive, although *E. gibbifolia* doesn't seem to take off like the others. The extremely hot, dry summer we have just experienced has stressed a lot of new plantings and the *Eremophila* are no exception. Among this lot we also have a mystery plant that we thought was *E. racemosa* but isn't - so we will have to wait and see.

While we were away in October we again visited Neil Marriott's nursery at Stawell and also a nursery at Pomonal, in the Grampians. We picked up some interesting species of *Eremophila* on Neil's "discards" table for \$1 each. We bought *E. glabra* var. *viridifolia*, *E. hillii*, and another *E. oldfieldii* var. *angustifolia*. Our first specimen of this plant, now 18 months old, has started to flower recently and is now covered with orange flowers. We also bought a second *E. maculata* var. *brevifolia* to replace the one we lost to mould last year. This time we planted it in our windiest and driest spot, and this seems to have been successful - it flowers at every opportunity, and we hope it survives the winter!

The grafted *E. pterocarpa* that we got from Neil in 1989 is doing wonderfully - it flowers after rain and the dusky pink flowers look lovely against its grey foliage. Our only regret is that we planted it in a bed surrounded by grey Besser bricks so the contrast is not the best.

The *E. racemosa*, *E. ionantha* and *E. nivea* that are also two years old are doing well and are very easy to strike, although the latter hasn't flowered much. [STOP PRESS —the dog dug up the *E. ionantha* last night; he's in the doghouse, so to speak, but we have some cuttings to replace it. He also damaged the *E. racemosa* but it is still in the ground at least]. We have had a couple of years of light frosts and they are yet to be fully tested under normal Canberra conditions. We have also found *E. maculata* "Wendy" and *E. calorhabdos* easy to strike and very hardy (although the latter needs to be pruned regularly to stop it falling over).

One thing we have had little luck with is forms of *E. denticulata*. We had a yellow ground cover form a couple of years ago but it died, and other examples of the species have not proved hardy. If you have any of these suitable for cuttings we would be pleased to receive them. We plan to buy a bunch of species from Neil Marriott by mail order in spring, and hope to score a few then. [I suspect you mean *E. glabra* not *E. denticulata*? Ed.]

Today we went with our local SGAP group on a walk in the Botanic Gardens to see the correas. We happened to pass a few *Eremophila*:- *E. bowmanii* var. *latifolia* was flowering well, and the *E. weldii* also had a couple of blooms. The *E. longifolia* a most interesting looking plant, had plenty of growth but no flowers."

In response to the note about the burning of the soft *Myoporum* stock used for grafting, Peter Hall from Pinery in S.A. has written:

"I have found September, October or later the best time to plant; some plants put in at this time are now up to a metre high (June), although they are watered they have no protection from wind or sun, being planted in the middle of a 70 acre paddock with nothing but a fence and a wire netting guard around them. I wonder if the place the stock plant comes from makes a difference, mine are grown from cuttings taken from *Myoporum insulare* growing a few kilometres inland from the coast behind Port Parham or Bald Hill, usually in pretty exposed position and on very poor soil, without much rainfall. This may help them to withstand the summer months later".

Cherree Densley, Killarney, Victoria, in writing to Bob raised an issue which we may like to take up in the future:

"How to make people aware that eremophilas exist"

She then goes on to suggest that a promotion of eremophilas through the Nursery Associations might be of value, or some kind of general publicity campaign could be used to raise public awareness of the genus, and in particular the more easily cultivated species.

Although not a member of the group yet, Jan Cooper, Auburn, N.S.W. has written to find out more about our study group, with the intention of joining us. Included with her letter was a copy of a page taken from her SGAP branch's newsletter which prompted her to write; it is a summary to our last ESG Newsletter. It is very encouraging indeed to know that the information you as members provide is being used in this way by ASGAP branches.

Thank you to Ken Warnes for the time he has put into the preparation of a number of articles. A few have been used this time, the remainder will be used in future issues.

The ESG has received a copy of the newsletter from the Birds & Native Plants Study Group, and has reciprocated by sending to them ours. As relevant material appears I will pass it on via our Newsletter.

SOME THOUGHTS ON GRAFTING

Ken Warnes

I've noticed several reports of *M. parvifolium* being used as a grafting stock. I find this surprising as in our area we have trouble with nematodes on this species. Quite regularly large areas go out after two or three years and this seems to apply to most forms.

Also I would have thought a stock of *M. parvifolium* would struggle to support the top growth of all but the smaller Eremophilas. I know *M. parvifolium* is readily available and strikes easily but it is certainly not a species I would be using. I use *M. insulare* for large species, *M. acuminatum* forms for smaller ones and *M. gracile* for fine wooded species. However, species suitability will certainly vary around Australia.

One thing I have found is that grafting does not overcome our alkalinity problem, in fact in some species such as *hillii* chlorosis is more likely on a grafted plant. Our house area pH is 8.5.

I also regularly lose plants when the stock dies beneath a healthy top. Whether this is due to long term incompatibility between stock and scion or stock unsuitable to our soils and climate I don't know.

Personally I would rather have my *Eremophilas* growing on their own roots but I must admit that grafting has a major role in extending the range of species we can grow.

NOTES ON EREMOPHILA

Ken Warnes

1) *MORE EREMOPHILA BEHRIANA*

In Newsletter 42 Colin Jennings wrote of finding *Eremophila behriana* adjacent to the railway line between Karoonda and Peebinga. Coincidentally the best form I know also occurs adjacent to a railway line 2km north of Cummins on southern Eyre Peninsula. This form is nearly prostrate and has thicker, larger leaves and larger, purple flowers than others. As at Karoonda, it has regrown well following grading and has even shot from damaged roots. (Over recent years tracks have been graded along most of our rail-lines, enabling access for road vehicles but causing enormous damage to what were in many cases reasonable samples of remnant vegetation.)

A few plants remained until recently in an area of scrub on white sand near Stockport (25km north of Gawler) among *Triodia* under mallee.

It would appear that the species is largely associated with ancient coast lines. So imagine my surprise to find a number of plants growing in porphyry granite about 1km south of Scrubby Peak in the southern Gawler Ranges at an altitude of at least 300m and the true *Eucalyptus lansdowneana* subsp. *lansdowneana*. This is surely the highest and most northerly location to date. (N.B. The Gawler Ranges are on northern Eyre Peninsula nowhere near the town of Gawler).

This form is a spindly undershrub in nature. Cuttings have struck extremely well and it will be interesting to follow its performance in cultivation.

Incidentally rabbits have taken a liking to my plant from Cummins and have pruned it to bare wood. Regrowth is becoming apparent.

2) *EREMOPHILA GLABRA*

From Newsletter 42. I wonder if the *E. glabra* Colin mentioned is the subsp. "*murrayana*", a low growing narrow-leaved form with varying degrees of hairiness and viscosity occurring from the northern mallee to at least 150km north of the River Murray. I once saw it growing in profusion on Dangali Conservation Park north of Renmark in an area burnt out the previous summer. They appeared to be seedlings, not regrowth, and the best were very beautiful small shrubs with bright green leaves and vivid orange-red flowers. It is a subspecies not commonly seen in cultivation and I have lost all my plants.

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