

Association of Societies for Growing Australian Plants
EREMOPHILA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER No. 52

April 1994

The response to the request for outstanding membership subscriptions has been generally good, however, there are still a significant number of members who have not renewed, nor indicated their intentions about continuing.

On the back page you will find a small note letting you know if you are still in arrears, or if you are financial, together with the year in which you last paid. If unfinancial this will be your LAST newsletter, unless payment is made promptly by the end of April 1994.

Subscription of \$2 is due in June each year. We are still able to hold it at this ridiculously low figure due to the assistance we receive from the staff of the Herbarium at the Adelaide Botanic Garden. We still receive a modest return from the sale of the Study Group's Booklet, financed by SA region of ASGAP. I am sure that you will agree that you don't get too much these days for near to nothing.

Thank you to those of you who have sent in notes relating to your eremophilas, I am able to extract information from most and print it in due course. I would appreciate some 'newsy' letters from any of you who make trips into areas that the rest of us do not get the opportunity to visit; clearly we are interested in the eremophilas that grow in these places but are equally interested in plants that will grow in association with eremophilas.

To those of you who have written to me during the latter part of January or in February, please accept my apologies if you did not get a prompt reply. I had shoulder surgery early in February, and my right arm was 'out of action' for the four weeks following. I hope to get back into the classroom in early May with a fully restored shoulder.

Colin Jennings

STUDY GROUP COORDINATOR

Jan Sked, who has been our Study Group Coordinator since the ASGAP Biennial Conference in Hobart in January 1990, retired from her position at the Conference in Sydney in September last.

Jan worked untiringly to help the study groups in their activities and we thank her for her contribution during her term as Coordinator, and wish her well in her many ventures.

At the time of the Conference there was no nomination for her replacement, however, I am pleased to let you know that Mrs Helen Morrow has offered herself to fill the position and was appointed on February 26th. We welcome Helen to the position.

Helen is a member of the Maroondah Group of SGAP in Victoria.

One of Jan's final exercises was to prepare a history of the Study Groups. With her final letter she has included her paper on this interesting aspect of Australian native plant culture.

It is a document of some sixteen pages and is far too long to print as part of our newsletter. If anyone is interested in receiving a copy, I can photocopy a set and send it to you, but there will be a cost of \$1.50 to cover printing and postage.

Colin Jennings

WILD FLOWER SHOW

For those of you living in New South Wales or who may be travelling in the region in July, there is to be a Wild Flower Show at the Nursery Industry Association Site, Annangrove Road, Rouse Hill. This show will be held on Saturday and Sunday July 23rd and 24th 1994.

The plan is to encourage the growing of native plants and to show their relationship to the environment. I understand that Study Groups have been asked to support the show.

I have not been able to act on this but if there is anyone in the region who might like to do something, they could let me know and I will give them further information.

Colin Jennings

PASSING OF GEOFF BLYTON

Geoff joined the Study Group almost two years ago, and in his first letter to me stated that he was a keen grower of many genera, but had an interest in the eremophilas and wanted to learn more of their ways.

In the March 1994 issue of *Native Plants for New South Wales* I noted a tribute to Geoff in the Presidential Bulletin, written by Gordon Brooks.

That tribute is printed below.

In the last issue I wrote of my anticipation of a pleasant duty of conferring Life Membership on Geoff Blyton at the South West Slopes Group meeting at Cootamundra in November. This was a wonderful moment for Geoff, his wife Marj, his friends in that Group, and for me because I recognised that his election to Life Membership was thoroughly deserved.

Sadly I have to report that Geoff passed away suddenly on 23rd January. As a young man he fought along the Kokoda Trail in New Guinea and, in due time, returned to enter the Anglican priesthood. He joined SGAP in 1963 and estimated he gave some 30,000 native plants to individuals and the community. Clearly he was a man who saw beauty in both human beings and in nature and he worked tirelessly in the broadest sense for the community, consistent with his faith in God. Geoff will be sorely missed at Tumut and in the surrounding districts. We convey our profound sympathy to Marj and family. Alec Hansen represented the Society at Geoff's memorial service.

Colin Jennings

NEXT ISSUE

Quite a few eremophilas have been used in 'street plantings' both in metropolitan and country areas. This would be a useful topic to pursue in the next newsletter. Any information that you, as members, might be able to pass on would be very much appreciated.

Colin Jennings

FROM YOUR LETTERS

David Gordon, 'Myall Park' Glenmorgan, Queensland

In a brief note responding to Ian Jardine's request for help with his seed germination, David suggests the 'bog method' with which he has had spectacular success, potting up the seedlings almost at once after germination.

Leon Steinhardt, Laidley, Queensland

Unfortunately Leon reports that *Eremophila* growing has come to a halt. 1991 was very dry and as a result many of the younger plants died off. They had no water at all, the dam was dry and they had to buy drinking water.

1993 has been even worse, with it being the driest year on record since records began in the 1880's. Coupled with this, the maximum temperatures have been over 35°C for most days.

Nevertheless, says Leon, the established eremophilas grow on. About fifteen species in all have not succumbed, although several have become rather woody.

In closing Leon says that there is one thing to be thankful for, and that is, without the eremophilas and the dry country wattles that are growing, the place would look like a desert.

Brian Slater, Broken Hill, New South Wales

Brian has recently joined the Study Group. In his first letter to me he says that he is coordinator of a Landcare and Environmental Action Plan in Broken Hill and is planning to use many eremophilas in landscaping projects around the town in the future. He also has about a hundred species growing in a landscaped area on his block.

Cherree Densley, Killarney, Victoria

Has asked us to keep in mind the ASGAP Conference in Ballarat, Victoria from 23rd to 30th September 1995. Cherree says that it would be great to have a display of eremophilas at this event. Potted plants as well as cuts could be used.

Norma Boschen was guest speaker at the Warrnambool and District SGAP meeting last October and took with her several buckets of cut eremophilas for display at the meeting and at their show the following day. The Warrnambool members quickly snapped up the plants Norma took to sell and were keen to receive cutting material from the cuts on display.

Cherree goes on to say that eremophilas are almost as popular as correas in that area.

The soil in which Cherree is growing her plants is acidic and is 1 km from the sea, with coastal cloud and showers; the soil is volcanic. To date approximately thirty species are growing well.

Philip Strong, Charmhaven, New South Wales

Philip is not a member, but his mother is and he was interested to read in her newsletter the article written by Russell Wait in newsletter No. 51 the information regarding *Prostanthera megacalyx*.

Philip wrote to me in an effort to contact Russell.

Philip does, however, have one success story with eremophilas worth recording. He had a plant of *Eremophila bignoniiflora* x *longifolia* growing in a pot; not being game to plant it out in the garden. The plant took matters into its own hands and sent roots down through the drain holes and is now well and truly on its way. At about two metres tall the plant is obviously quite healthy, although flowering only sparingly. He wonders if this is a possible method for garden culture for

those on the east coast. Obviously it is a question of drainage, although the feeder roots would be well down into the soil which normally gives so much trouble.

Philip also does a lot of grafting with prostantheras and emphasises the need for the correct selection of rootstock material. He says that *Myoporum montanum* rootstock does not seem to do well in his area, and is about to trial *Myoporum acuminatum*; this species grows well in the Gosford area on the tidal mangrove swamps.

PANGARINDA ARBORETUM

We are writing to you on behalf of the Pangarinda Arboretum Committee. The project aims are to grow, display and preserve a collection of plants of lower rainfall area, rare and endangered species for scientific, horticultural, educational and recreational use by the public.

The Arboretum is being developed on 75 acres of undulating sandy ground, Section 72 Hundred of Seymour at Wellington East South Australia.

It is a project of the District Council of Meningie who have title to the land. The committee consists a group of enthusiastic people who were elected at a public meeting.

The committee is preparing to vermin proof an area, (approximately 12 acres to enable initial plantings to commence in autumn. These will consist largely of Windbreaks of direct seeded local species.

Preliminary plans being developed by the committee include:-

1. Grid reference map, for contour and soil survey and planting orientation.
2. Infrastructure map, roads, pathways, reticulation, landscaping and amenities.
3. Plan of plant communities, specific project areas, establishment of micro climates, specific general areas, aesthetics, agriculturally useful species, native food plants, cut flower development etc.

A draft of the preliminary plans will be distributed for comment to people who register an interest in the project.

Upon adoption of this concept plan the committee will be responsible to ensure that participants in this project comply with it.

We are seeking from you an expression of interest in involvement, immediate or deferred, short term or long term, i.e.:-

- a. Specific projects, educational/scientific.
- b. Assistance with infrastructure.
- c. Industry product trials.
- d. Propagation/plantings/direct seedings.
- e. Promotion of native plants and Marketing.
- f. Vermin and Weed control practices.

Although funding for preliminary works is already in hand we would appreciate sponsorship, financial support or other from Private or Public sources to ensure that this project is achievable.

Project participants will be invited to advertise but strictly in accordance with guidelines to be established by the committee.

If this project is of interest to you, your group or institution, please advise the Pangarinda Arboretum Committee of your possible involvement even if you are unable to contribute within the foreseeable future.

Kaye Bartlett, Secretary
Pangarinda Arboretum Committee
c/- Winpara, Jervois 5259

GROWING EREMOPHILA LONGIFOLIA FROM BONSAI

In November 1993 Guy Richmond from the School of Environmental Biology presented me with a plant called *Eremophila longifolia* to bonsai, the plant at this stage was eighteen months old.

Having received the plant as an experiment I decided to trim and prune the Eremophila and to transplant it into a bonsai pot.

When I took it out of its original pot the roots were 35 cm long when untangled, I therefore cut the roots to 10 cm and removed some branches and leaves to balance the root cutting.

During the first two weeks the Eremophila seemed to adapt to its new environment, two weeks later I noticed that the leaves and branches were not taken on the one side, so I cut off the branches to the side that was not developing.

However, after nursing the plant for the next two weeks and repotting in a mixture of sandy loam and cow manure, and watering frequently every night the plant developed buds on the remaining two branches after two weeks.

In January 1994 the buds were developing rapidly and by February the trunk was 10 cm high and the branches had grown 24 cm long with excellent foliage although it is still only growing on the one side, the following months will be very interesting to see if other branches will stem from the trunk, and exactly what happens to the Eremophila over the next year, after further pruning and repotting.

James Mitchell

YOU ARE ~~FINANCIAL~~/UNFINANCIAL

LAST PAYMENT WAS MADE 1991.....\$4.50.....

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