

Association of Societies for Growing Australian Plants
EREMOPHILA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER No. 57

December 1995

Please accept my apologies for the lateness of this issue of the Newsletter. I have been awaiting material for inclusion, however, it has not arrived and I am left with delaying further or having to compile it with limited resources.

The list of species eremophilas has created some interest outside of the Study Group. I have had several requests for it and have been able to make contacts with people who were previously unaware of the existence of the Group.

I will make further reference to the ASGAP Conference in a separate item, however, I do wish to acknowledge the sterling contributions of Chris Strachan, who supplied a large collection of cut flowers for the display and of Norma Boschen, who with her husband Keith, helped with their cut flowers and potted plants, as well as spending a good deal of time assisting with the construction of the display and with being present on the Tuesday night to help with information etc. Also I would like to thank my wife Myrnie for her great contribution at all times.

I had hoped to make some analysis of the census returns, however, I am at the moment not quite sure what is relevant and what is not. You will find below a listing of the ten most popularly grown species. I hope to compile a state by state summary for the next issue of the Newsletter.

I have had no response to the need for a booklet to follow on from our first exercise, i.e. from Newsletter No. 35 to the present. This matter will rest until I hear more.

It is also fitting that I acknowledge the continued contribution of Ray Isaacson. Ray has always been very generous in providing cutting material for members of the Study Group. He has again provided a very significant bulk of the cutting material which I distributed to ten members in October. Thanks are also due to Bob Chinnock for the material that he provided as well. Each package contained approximately 500g of cuttings, just enough to fit comfortably into an Express Delivery envelope. I was also able to refer to the census returns of the members so that they received species not already being grown by them. I think that I have now supplied all requests for cutting material that I have received. The next lot will be sent out in February/March, so if you would like to receive some cuttings please let me know.

I received in the mail a very nice package of cleaned fruits from Meg Officer. She has been able to make a small, but comprehensive collection of species found on their property near Mullewa in Western Australia. I will be sending portions to those who asked for seed samples. If by about mid-January you have not received any, and asked for them, please let me know. I think my list might be incomplete.

Colin Jennings

ASGAP CONFERENCE - BALLARAT

The Conference was a great success and the organisers are to be congratulated on their planning and organisation throughout the Conference proper.

The Study Group Leaders' meeting was held on the Saturday afternoon, with a number of items discussed. I have not yet received a copy of the minutes, but will summarise the meeting in the next issue. After a few anxious moments regarding our site for the Tuesday display we were able to get to work on Tuesday morning, setting up our contribution.

Norma, Keith, Myrnie and I spent most of the morning arranging cuttings into display vases, kindly loaned to us by SGAP—South Australian Region. We are also indebted to the Botanic Garden in Adelaide for allowing us to use a display set which was prepared by Bob Chinnock several years ago.

In addition to the live material I was able to present a continuous slide show of 100 species of eremophilas on a small screen adjacent to our plants. This, according to the comments, was exceptionally well received, for I was able to show many species on the screen which are not commonly seen in cultivation.

Sales of our booklet were brisk, questions about eremophilas kept us busy for the entire evening, and we were able to renew some old acquaintances as well as signing up a number of new members to the Study Group. A copy of Guy Richmond's thesis was on display and I understand that one enthusiast has sent for a copy.

Unfortunately we had to return to Adelaide early on the following morning and so after a rather tiring day had to pull down the display and pack up for the return.

The next ASGAP Conference is to be held in Adelaide in 1997. We will be organising a display or two, so I firstly would like to encourage you to attend the conference and also to assist, if possible, in making our display even better than the last one. It is an excellent way to promote our eremophilas to the public as well as to the 'converted'.

Colin Jennings

FROST

Thank you to those who have responded to the request for information about frost tolerant or intolerant eremophilas. It has been interesting to note that many of the grey leaf species are somewhat intolerant, however, until I get a few more responses I am not prepared to 'go out on a limb' and make categorical statements about their suitability or otherwise. I would like to get this summary done for the next issue, so please let me have your experiences if you have not already done so.

Colin Jennings

FROM YOUR LETTERS

Lyndal Thorburn & Tom Jordan – Queanbeyan, New South Wales

In response to your questions about frost hardiness, we have been growing eremophilas in Queanbeyan for over five years. Many are in tubs, but over the last two years, we have more in the garden. The more successful ones are in prepared beds where garden soil has been added and built up. Nearly all have survived two very different winters. Typical winter days range from about -1°C up to about 10°C, with up to 60 frosts in a winter. The rainfall pattern in this district is unusual in that

rain is unpredictable, all months of the year have nearly the same average – around 50mm. Our garden is on a hill, with a northerly aspect, and good surrounding tree shelter, so we do miss some local frosts and fogs.

In 1994, after a drought in autumn and winter, we had a record series of around 30 frosts in August with cold days. Almost all eremophilas did well – *E. abietina* graft, *E. pterocarpa* graft and *E. youngii* graft, *E. microtheca* and *E. drummondii*. *Eremophila spectabilis* maintained its show right up to the end of winter, while *E. decipiens* started to flower in the middle of the spring frosts. There was less spring flower after the frosts than in other years – as the drought continued on to January.

In 1995, by contrast, the drought broke irregularly in autumn, with a week of very early frosts in March, followed by unusually warm weather, a cool, damp July, and a very warm, early spring – if you can see a pattern, let me know, because I can't.

We lost a grafted *E. latrobei* after the early frosts and a grafted *E. crenulata* died back to the lower main stem. By contrast the *E. maculata* var. *brevifolia* was in magnificent flower all autumn and winter. *Eremophila decipiens* had a couple of good shows over this time, and *E. microtheca* was a showy mauve. *Eremophila maculata* var. *aurea* was a beautiful, clear yellow in autumn and we are now getting a good spring show with *E. glabra* (yellow prostrate), *E. drummondii* and *E. christophorii*. Later, *E. glabra* (burgundy) will display well, branches of the grafted *E. eriocalyx* will collapse under the weight of creamy blossom and *E. alternifolia* will be covered with spotted cream flowers – all these plants unaffected by the frost. Others unaffected are *E. nivea*, *E. verticillata*, *E. barbata*, *E. macgillivrayi*, *E. rotundifolia*, *E. callorhabdos* and *E. divaricata*.

Foliage plants have done well over the winters. The thick, ground-hugging foliage of *E. biserrata*, in a tub, has been admired all through the winter, as has *E. subfloccosa* with its furry grey leaves that form a tight cylinder around the stems. *Eremophila glabra* var. *viridiflora*? has a compact green habit with pale green flowers that the bees like, but which are hard to see. It has been damaged in some years by frost, but not this one.

The frosts burn the edges of the leaves of several varieties of *E. maculata* and of *E. glabra* as well as the species *E. polyclada*, *E. saligna* and *E. longifolia*, but these recover vigorously in spring. Others that are affected, but recover, are *E. racemosa*, *E. freelingii*, *E. viscida*, *E. metallicorum* and *E. bignoniiflora* (in its first winter).

In fact, while a few eremophilas disliked the unusual autumn frosts and many species may prefer it to be generally hotter, most of our sixty species and varieties of *Eremophila* seem to be happy enough with winters here, with many thriving.

(The name *E. glabra* var. *viridiflora* has been sunk into synonymy. Depending on its collection site it would be: South Australia – *Eremophila subfloccosa* subsp. '*glandulosa*'; Western Australia – *Eremophila glabra* subsp. *albicans*).

Editor

NATURAL HYBRIDS

In response to a number of enquiries a list of the recognised hybrids is printed here.

<i>Eremophila crassifolia</i> × <i>Myoporum platycarpum</i>	(SA)
<i>Eremophila alternifolia</i> × <i>Myoporum platycarpum</i>	(SA)
<i>Eremophila alternifolia</i> × <i>Eremophila glabra</i>	(SA)
<i>Eremophila latrobei</i> × <i>Eremophila bowmanii</i>	(NSW)

<i>Eremophila latrobei</i> × <i>Eremophila margarethae</i>	(WA)
<i>Eremophila latrobei</i> × <i>Eremophila obovata</i>	(NT)
<i>Eremophila latrobei</i> × <i>Eremophila glabra</i>	(Qld)
<i>Eremophila dempsteri</i> × <i>Eremophila psilocalyx</i>	(WA)
<i>Eremophila polyclada</i> × <i>Eremophila divaricata</i>	(Vic. or NSW)
<i>Eremophila polyclada</i> × <i>Eremophila bignoniiflora</i>	(Qld)
<i>Eremophila dichroantha</i> × <i>Eremophila psilocalyx</i>	(WA)
<i>Eremophila duttonii</i> × <i>Eremophila serrulata</i>	(NSW)
<i>Eremophila duttonii</i> × <i>Eremophila maculata</i>	(SA)
<i>Eremophila oppositifolia</i> × <i>Eremophila maculata</i>	(SA)
<i>Eremophila oppositifolia</i> × <i>Eremophila scoparia</i>	(SA)
<i>Eremophila oppositifolia</i> × <i>Eremophila serrulata</i>	(SA)
<i>Eremophila fraseri</i> × <i>Eremophila platycalyx</i>	(WA)
<i>Eremophila gilesii</i> × <i>Eremophila spectabilis</i>	(WA)

If you come across any plant in your travels that appears to be a hybrid, please collect a flowering piece, plus a small portion of the two putative parents if they are nearby. Record location as precise as possible, date of collection and collector. Note: hybrid plants usually occur as one of a few individuals, usually in disturbed sites, so some comments on this would be valuable.

Bob Chinnock

TEN MOST COMMONLY GROWN EREMOPHILAS

Not a lot of surprises here, but the one most commonly grown by members was *E. polyclada* after the two obvious *E. glabra* and *E. maculata*, which are streets ahead.

The remaining seven are, not in any order: *Eremophila bignoniiflora*, *E. calorhabdos*, *E. decipiens*, *E. oppositifolia*, *E. weldii*, *E. longifolia* and *E. macdonnellii*.

It was interesting to note the *E. latrobei* was a close eleventh. This is a popular plant and seems to offer a range of colour and foliage forms, which could make a collection in their own right.

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