

Association of Societies for Growing Australian Plants
EREMOPHILA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER No. 62

August 1997

It has been decided to prepare this Newsletter a little earlier than usual due to the forthcoming ASGAP Conference here in Adelaide and the Saturday Seminar/Workshop which the Study Group is holding on the Saturday following the close of the Conference in the Lecture Room of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens. This Study Group meeting is definitely on, since we received quite a positive response to the initial request for expressions of interest.

In addition I was very pleased with the response from those who indicated that they would be able to help in some way with the display that I was asked to set up on behalf of the Study Group at the SA Region's Spring Show and Plant Sale. This is to be held in the Hamilton Hall of the Wayville Showgrounds on the Saturday/Sunday, 27-28 September. **Please refer to your last Newsletter for the details.** For those of you who have not been to one of the SA Region's plant sales before, we do have a very good range of genera and species, often one can pick up the rare and unusual. There is always a good selection of eremophilas, and this year's show should be no exception. Just remember, if you intend to take plants interstate you might have to check with your local authorities about regulations and permits etc.

A **return sheet** is included for those who are planning to be in Adelaide for the Conference, the Show and/or the Seminar/Workshop. It would be most appreciated if you could **return this sheet** to me before the **end of August** so that I can get an estimate of the numbers who will be here and what you might be able to help with. I realise that many of you have already said that you would be coming and that you could help in certain ways. Since those letters were sent it is quite possible that circumstances have changed, this way I will have up to date information, particularly with regard to the Seminar/Workshop.

For those who have paid their subscriptions since the last Newsletter was sent out, you will find your receipts enclosed.

Colin Jennings

WA TRIP 1996

(The following article has been prepared from a letter which Russell Wait wrote to me several weeks ago, reporting on his extensive - 8314km - trip to WA in 1996 which proved to be very successful. Members may recall a report in a Newsletter last year dealing with Russell's 1995 trip to WA. The information recorded here is mainly related to habitat and plant structure - details of specific locations have been omitted due to the fact that many of the species are rare and endangered and reporting of such data is not permitted under the permit arrangements with CALM.)

Eremophila "oblonga"

40cm high by 40cm wide. Found west of Balladonia, it has tiny leaves similar to those of *E. parvifolia*. It was found growing in association with *E. ionantha*, *E. scoparia*, *E. dempsteri*, *E. glabra*, *Grevillea huegelii*, *Eucalyptus calycogona* and other eucalypts in woodland growing to about 10m. The country was undulating with limestone to the surface on the higher ground.

Eremophila "hygrophana"

50cm high by 50cm wide. Found on both the Leonora to Laverton Road and the Leonora to Willuna Road, not in large numbers at any sites. Leaf colour from gold to grey, leaves of varying sizes. All shrubs were lush and looked as if they had grown from ground level following the rains. Growing in these sites amongst *E. youngii*, *E. "glandulifera"*, *E. platycalyx*, *E. granitica*, *E. serrulata*, *E. metallicorum* and *Acacia* species in areas obviously affected by floods. It was also found near the Canning Stock Route growing in association with *E. punctata* and *Acacia* species, also in a flood affected site. Near Ned's Creek Station homestead it was growing together with *E. "arguta"*, *Eucalyptus* and *Acacia* species on a flood plain in an open woodland situation; plants of *Swainsonia*

dampieri were found nearby. On the Cue-Beringarra Road it was found with *E. pterocarpa*, *E. pantonii*, *E. longifolia* and *Acacia* species. It was also located in a number of other unrecorded sites.

***Eremophila* "shonae subsp. diffusa"**

1.1m high by 2m wide. A wispy, open shrub with blue flowers found on the Willuna-Ned's Creek Road growing on a rocky outcrop with *E. "jucunda"* and *Acacia* species.

***Eremophila* "arguta"**

20cm high by 1.0m wide. South West of Ned's Creek Station growing with *E. "hygrophana"*. The main stem was 30mm with arched branches, leaves of varying size. Flood debris was found amongst the bushes indicating the height of the flood waters. On some plants blue flowers were noted, but it would seem from the flowering that this would not make a mass display. This species was first discovered in the 1960's near Mt. Augustus, some 300km north of this location; it has not been recorded since.

***Eremophila* "citrina"**

80cm high by 50cm wide. Both the grey and gold leaf forms were found growing together south of Kumarina amongst *Acacia* species on a rocky hill on iron stone in association with spinifex.

***Eremophila* "canaliculata"**

60cm high by 1.2m wide. They were growing on a rocky hill near to the base of plants of *E. latrobei*, *E. margarethae* and *Acacia* species, along the road west of Three Rivers Station. Plants were also found on a sandy loam, together with *Acacia* species, north of Mt. Augustus.

***Eremophila* "rigida"**

1.8m high by 2.0m wide. Located north west of Mingah Spring Station. Many plants had dead wood, indicating hard times in the past. They were predominant over a wide area with bare ground between plants. Plants had off-white flowers, not as attractive as *E. "spathulata"*, and with smaller leaves.

***Eremophila* "caespitosa"**

30cm high by 50cm wide. It was growing with *E. "jucunda"* in loam on a slight slope with very little vegetation, north west of Woodlands Station Homestead. A bush with soft, grey foliage and blue flowers.

***Eremophila* "conferta"**

2.0m high by 2.0m wide. Found in the Mt. Augustus area together with *Acacia* species and *E. "phyllopoda"* on stony ground. Those found south of Burringor were the tallest bushes, others were generally about a metre tall with grey foliage and blue flowers.

***Eremophila* "accrescens"**

1.0m high by 1.4m wide. Found growing with *E. cuneifolia*, *E. "reticulata"* and *Acacia* species on the edge of a floodway.

***Eremophila* "conglomerata"**

1.2m high by 1.5m wide. West of Sandstone, and growing at a number of other sites in *Acacia* woodlands together with species such as *E. "shonae"*, *E. foliosissima*, *E. forrestii* and *E. latrobei*. Plants have sticky green foliage, blue flowers and wine coloured calyx. Most of the bushes have an open habit with upright branches. At one site the plants were found growing in a waterway.

***Eremophila* "glandulifera"**

1.5m high by 1.1m wide. Growing in loamy soil with other shrubs and *Acacia* species. It is very similar to *E. forrestii*, only it has a lot more colour in the flower (pink). One plant was found with gold foliage and red flowers.

***Eremophila* "malacoides"**

50cm high by 50cm wide. Seen in several locations, most of the foliage had been severely eaten and the plants looked very ragged, with a few blue flowers towards the ends of the branches. The area was open, flat country with indications of saline seepage. Also found here were *E. maculata* and *E. glabra*, the latter being 2m high by 2.5m wide, with grey foliage and very attractive red flowers.

***Eremophila* "enata"**

30cm high by 40cm wide. Growing on open, flat ground. This species has green foliage, pink to blue flowers with a small calyx.

***Eremophila* "flabellata"**

1.1m high by 50cm wide. Found growing in an open situation on a stony slope. Leaves are rounded and serrated, the flower is blue. It was growing around plants of *E. "jucunda"* that had deep blue flowers.

***Eremophila* "obliquisepala"**

40cm high by 40cm wide. Growing on a plain with little else. Looks like a larger form of *E. georgei* and with a blue flower.

***Eremophila* "reticulata"**

2m high by 2m wide. Growing on loam on an open plain under acacias. Plants have a greyish foliage and pink flowers. Considered to be a much better form than the ones located in 1995.

***Eremophila* "flaccida"**

1m high by 2m wide. Plants were found growing on stony rises and appeared as the dominant species in the location. Plants have very leathery leaves with large, pale purple flowers, the calyx is persistent.

(The above *Eremophila* species are all unpublished, hence the use of quotation marks and the names being not in italics. The following eremophilas all have published names, and many of them are already in cultivation. They have been detailed here since they were referred to in Russell's letter. Ed.).

Eremophila strongylophylla

50cm high by 70cm wide. Growing in shade in loam on the Murchison River flood plains between Mt. Gould and Beringatta Homestead. It was growing in a thick stand of *Acacia* species, with *E. laanii* nearby. The grey foliage allows the blue flowers to be attractively displayed.

Eremophila dempsteri

3m high by 2.5m wide. Was growing on stony to loamy soils with shrubs and eucalypt trees. The plants found had pink flowers, the white flowered form was also sighted.

Eremophila pantonii

2m high by 1.5m wide. Growing on stony slopes and on loamy soils. This form was a much better blue colour than the one normally seen in cultivation.

Eremophila homoplastica

40cm high by 30cm wide. Growing mostly on open plains with little other plant growth. I drove past this in 1995 and this year I tripped over it in the grass, but later found it in the open on bare ground.

Eremophila miniata

Growing on sandy loam, generally in the vicinity of salty ground. This one had brick red flowers, whilst most had pale pink ones. A yellow form was also located.

Eremophila punctata

1.8m high by 1.8m wide. Growing on stony rises. Plants were generally open in habit, but one or two had a quite dense structure, with green, sticky foliage and blue flowers.

Eremophila glutinosa

1.5m high by 90cm wide. Growing on rocky hills, it has thin, green foliage and pink flowers.

Eremophila clarkei

40cm high by 50cm wide. This was an odd form of the species, it had harsh leaves and red stems. Found growing on slopes on loam with stones and little else.

Eremophila ramiflora

2.2m high by 2m wide. Mostly growing on loamy slopes where it was the most dominant species. Readily distinguished from *E. fraseri* by its red flowers that form on the old stems at the sites of the fallen leaves.

Eremophila laanii

4m high by 3m wide. Growing in and near the Murchison River. Flowers from white to pink. The native wasp was working the flowers very well.

Eremophila maculata

90cm high by 1.3m wide. Growing in crab-hole country where they were by themselves. Some had very tiny foliage, the rest had smaller foliage than that seen elsewhere in WA. The flower colour ranged from yellow through to pink, although the pink was not as good as others I had seen elsewhere.

Russeli Wait

In response to the article on "Eremophilas and the Law", the following was received from Jim Thomson:

"I sympathise with your grilling by the CIB gentlemen about sending plant material which smelt like marijuana. Still it could have been worse. Someone could have told them that you had been asking people to advise you on how to grow pot plants!"

FROM YOUR LETTERS

Noel Gane - Panania, NSW

"As I have only a very small block of suburban land in Sydney I decided to look at possible different leaf colours to provide a contrast to the mostly green foliage. I try to grow species that do not exceed

two metres in height. It is amazing how many species you can find, especially among those grafted. Some that I have and which are grafted include:

Eremophila maitlandii: a beautiful plant with blue flowers.

Eremophila compacta: small, compact plant to about 1m high.

Eremophila macdonnellii: spreads a little and has nice mauve flowers.

Eremophila nivea: one of the very best; plant it in your garden where everybody can notice it.

Eremophila hillii: a red flowered form now about 50cm by 50cm.

Eremophila bowmanii: A really nice shrub with mauve flowers and rounded leaves.

There are also quite a few small *E. glabra* forms available, some with attractive grey leaves. I have had some for years and they grow well. Also a very good prostrate plant sold as "Kalbarri Gold".

Eremophila youngii with its pink flowers is very hardy as is its mauve flowered variety "Iepidota". I now have a plant of *E. nivea* x *E. drummondii*, only small at the moment, but I am anxious for it to flower.

Last year at the August SGAP Show at Rouse Hill I purchased an *E. maculata* var. *brevifolia* in a 140mm pot. The plant was not quite 50mm tall, now in June 1997 it has grown to half a metre high by almost a metre wide and with lots of flower buds and a few flowers.

As I have previously written, I only fertilise using Paton's Native Plant Food, with a small sprinkling of Blood and Bone, but a large amount of stable manure is added to parts of the garden at anytime during the year."

Sue Oldfield - Rockbank, Victoria

"I have been considering writing to you for some time, but am wondering if I am being too negative. Last year at a Spring Plant Sale run by SGAP I bought two grafted eremophilas; *E. hillii* because I lost my last one to mildew after summer storms, and *E. abietina* because I was told it was hard to grow from cuttings. When I planted them out I was appalled at their roots. In 25 years of growing native plants I have never seen such pot bound plants. I cannot believe that selling plants in this condition will do anything to encourage people to try growing eremophilas, grafted or not. I paid \$12 for these plants, which did not have the grower's name on them, they are the only plants that I have watered this summer as I do not normally water anything.

On a happier note I am glad to say that my other eremophilas have survived a very dry year, 316mm for the last twelve months, about 75% of normal, correas are the main things that have succumbed."

(The above comments cause some concern. It is difficult to police all plants that are sold via plant sales, but one should be able to assume that the growers supplying plants will do the right thing by those who are buying. Sometimes we hear of the problem at the other end of the continuum; the plant had too few roots and was not established. Either way it is certainly not satisfactory and does little to encourage people to buy plants from plant sales. Colin)

Neil Marriott - Stawell, Victoria

"I have been feeling guilty for not doing 'my bit' for the Eremophila Study Group over the last few years after selling White Gums Nursery.

I was most amused to read of your drama with the CIB re *E. microtheca* cuttings. It reminded me of the numerous customers who would come to me insisting we had a fox hiding somewhere in the gardens. One 'old bloke' searched around for an hour or more - guess where he ended up? - going around in circles around a bed containing several plants of *E. microtheca*!! Since then we have always called it the "Foxy Eremophila".

Our new property is hilly granite country, with soils ranging from deep sand to rich chocolate loam. These have proven to be a bit light for most eremophilas on their own roots, although they take off when they get their roots into the clayey subsoil. Grafted plants on the other hand thrive in all of the soils.

A large amount of clayey subsoil was removed to form a level site for the house slab. With the front-end loader I formed this into quite a long mound about 2m high by 25m long. Numerous grafted and ungrafted plants, mainly eremophilas, were planted out in early summer 1995. The bed was mulched

with chopped -up branches and leaves. Now, eighteen months later the bed looks quite spectacular. One of the great failings of eremophilas for the average home gardener is the 'sameness' of the foliage of the vast majority of the species, however, those with spectacular foliage such as the silver *E. nivea* and *E. glabra* - Murchison River form, especially when grafted, form showy contrast plants for all gardens. With a bit of imagination, growers of eremophilas can create some quite beautiful foliage contrasts and combinations. I have mixed the silver *E. nivea*, *E. glabra* "subsp. tomentosa", *E. hillii* etc with the rich greens of *E. alternifolia*, *E. "complanata"*, *E. neglecta* etc and underplanted with contrasting low species such as *E. glabra* 'Kalbarri Carpet', *E. cuneifolia*, *E. "perglandulosa"*, *E. veronica* etc and the result, even if I do say so myself is most pleasing.

Many years ago I wrote an article for the ESG urging Study Group members to select 'superior' forms of species and species in their own right that will perform well in the average home garden, looking good for many years. Years later the range of species being grown by Study Group members has more than doubled, but how many selected, superior eremophilas have made their way into the general nursery trade? Certainly Tony Clark and Peter Lang have introduced some superb forms of *E. glabra*, *E. oppositifolia* etc and Peter and Ronda Hall are selling a fantastic range of species, but how many good, new forms or species of *Eremophila* do you see in the general nursery? Worse still, how many in the specialist native nursery?

Discussing this recently with Norma Boschen, we both agreed that there are some wonderful eremophilas that should be available to the general public. Selections of *E. oppositifolia* - purple flowered forms etc, grafted plants of *E. cuneifolia* - various colour forms (one is already being sold by Phillip Vaughan), *E. "spathulata"*, *E. pterocarpa* "subsp. acicularis", *E. platycalyx*, *E. oldfieldii* "subsp. oldfieldii" and "subsp. angustifolia" etc, as well as selections such as the superb dwarf, compact form of *E. youngii* "subsp. youngii", collected by both Norma and Russell Wait. No doubt members can greatly add to this list. This is the area of the ESG where, by and large, we have failed - lets hope that we can all work to change this over the next few years."

INTERNET

In his letter Neil also referred to an item on the Internet re a "new species found at Scotia, NSW" This so called new species is in fact *Eremophila glabra* "subsp. murrayana" which is found quite commonly along the Murray/Darling river system. An article appeared in the Adelaide *Advertiser* a few months ago announcing this find. After some examination of the data and the material submitted for examination Bob Chinnock has decided that it is as referred to above.

I have just heard that an article by Raul Rezl in the Czech Republic, dealing with his method of raising eremophilas from seed, which first appeared in our Newsletter last year, has found its way onto the Internet; it is to be found on the SGAP - NSW page. <http://www.ozemail.com.au/~sgap/jun97-5.html>

Colin Jennings

STUDY GROUP SEMINAR/WORKSHOP SATURDAY 4 OCTOBER

The information printed in the last Newsletter re this event is still relevant, and for those of you planning to attend on this day, I ask that you have a look at it again for the details included. The only alteration is that the \$5 is to be returned with the registration form. I did not receive any suggestions about topics to be presented or items to be discussed, however, Bob and I have been working on a programme which we hope will be of interest to you all.

The cost for the day will be \$5, which includes morning tea, lunch & afternoon tea. Would you please include this with the enclosed registration form which is to be returned to Colin at the address below by 31 August.

The Seminar/Workshop is open only to members of the Eremophila Study Group and will be limited to approximately 35 people, this is due to the size of the lecture room in which we will be meeting .

I know that a number of members are interested in acquiring some cutting material whilst they are here, so that they might increase their collections. To this end I ask those local members who are attending to bring a good selection of material suitable for cuttings to be taken. Those wishing to collect cuttings should bring the necessary plastic bags etc - I suggest that you use the green refrigerator, fresh food storage bags, they are designed to keep vegetables fresh and have proven valuable for transporting plant material.

The topics which we have organised include:

- The 'new' Eremophilas - an outline of the, as yet, undescribed species.
- Photography of Eremophilas - to be linked with the above topic.
- Preparing and keeping Herbarium specimens - valuable for those who do field collecting, or those just making a collection of their own plants.
- Grafting - demonstrations showing how to do this for yourself.

We hope that the above topics will prove valuable to those who attend. For those who cannot attend, the information which can be reported in the Newsletter will be presented in the next one.

Colin Jennings

EREMOPHILAS FOR THE GARDEN

Last year I was asked by Ivan Holliday if I would be prepared to assist him with the preparation of a book dealing with eremophilas. The SA Region of SGAP was prepared to finance the project. The book will include descriptions of approximately 70 species which are suited to garden cultivation.

A page is devoted to each species represented, with colour photos to match. The book is in the format which Ivan has used for his very popular Melaleuca books and many other titles.

It is hoped that this book will be available at the Conference. I will be getting copies to sell on behalf of the Study Group. I do not know how much they will retail for, so please do not send any money in anticipation. I will let you know of costs, including mailing, in the next Newsletter. They will no doubt be available from other outlets, and most probably from the SGAP booksales centres.

Colin Jennings

I had intended to include a list of nurseries which can be relied on to supply eremophilas. Space has not permitted it for this month. I will definitely get it into the next issue. In the meantime, if you have any that should be included I would like to hear from you. Also next month, the up to date membership list will be sent to you.

Leader: Colin Jennings, 4 Kinnaird Crescent, HIGHBURY SA 5089

Editor: Bob Chinnock (c/- Address below)

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