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EREMOPHILA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER No. 65

August 1998

The response to the Seminar/Workshop to be held in October has been excellent. I trust that those who have indicated their interest in this activity will benefit greatly from it. More details of a general nature about the weekend appear further on in this Newsletter. I have sent more specific details to all who registered interest and will not elaborate here - if you registered interest and to date have not had a reply from me, please contact me urgently.

I have been interested to note the number of eremophilas which have been putting on excellent growth here in Adelaide following our very good winter rains. Flowering of many of the winter flowering species has never been better, with the spring flowering species are now showing a good bud count. The New Holland Honeyeaters have been having a real feast on nectar produced by a moderately sized plant of *E. oppositifolia*; dropping from that plant to a rather scraggy specimen of *E. glabra* nearby for a second course.

FROM YOUR LETTERS

Peter Lang - Mildura, Vic

Thought I would add a little foot-note in regard to the letter written by Andrew Wilson, in Newsletter #64. I'll put my hand up that I was the person who supplied Kathy (Cathy) Echols with the *Eremophila* species mentioned, namely *E. cyanosa* ? Kathy... specialises in Australian, Mediterranean and Californian plants. She traveled to Australia some years back and visited a number of specialist nurseries, purchasing plants and carrying out incredible sets of conditions to take plants back to the satisfaction of Customs.

In regard to the question of what 'cyanosa' actually is, ... to me it sounds like the transposing of my handwriting from a label. I would have labeled the plant 'carnosa' as a form of *E. glabra*, and with my rather "strange" handwriting, the mistake would have been continued on. I could be wrong, but it sounds like this could be the situation.

Jocelyn Lindner - Ouyen, Vic

For a long time I have used eremophilas in Floral Art Work. After reading the article in the previous Newsletter from Peter Lang requesting information about eremophilas for cut flowers I rang him and told him of my experiences with them. I received the May Newsletter yesterday and thought it was time I wrote to you and passed on my thoughts and experiences. I also read a short article "Eremophilas as cut flowers" by T G Loffler in the latest *Australian Plants Journal*. I hope that the following comments are of some use.

I have belonged to the Pinnaroo (SA) Floral Art Group for a number of years and have shown at the Pinnaroo Show for many years, during this time I have used eremophilas in my work and have given them to others to use. I have also used them in fresh baskets of flowers which can be allowed to dry out and still look attractive and also in hall and church arrangements. Many eremophilas have good potential for the cut flower trade, especially the ones that have interesting calyces.

As a filler plant, *E. interstans* has great potential in both the flower and calyx stage. I have often said this has similar uses and potential to *Thryptomene* species. It has long stems and is easy to work with; I have seen it used in table arrangements for a wedding and have often used it in the calyx stage for basket arrangements.

Eremophila oppositifolia, in any of its colours, also has great potential; especially because it flowers when there is a shortage of other flowers. Its calyx also increases its length of time as a cut flower.

Eremophila youngii and *E. pantonii* are both useful because of their foliage and stem length. *Eremophila viscida*, especially the pink form, is another which shows potential because of its fresh foliage colour and also the calyx.

As foliage plants, *E. nivea* and *E. pterocarpa* are very useful, for both fresh work and arrangements that can be allowed to dry. I have treated both of these plants with glycerin successfully; I feel that *E. nivea* is not really suitable, when in full flower, for the flower trade as the flowers do not keep well and they drop. Its potential is in its foliage. Even though I haven't used *E. virens* much, because of the size of my bush, I can see potential for its large foliage.

One of my favourites is *E. miniata*. Because of its colour and large calyx, its uses could be many in the floral industry. I have used it for shoulder sprays and baskets and it would be useful in bridal work. Many comment that it is like small orchid.

The many forms of *E. maculata* have restricted use because of stem length, but have a definite place in shorter bunches; flowers picked at an early stage last well.

White flowers, like grey foliage, are often sought after in bunches of cut flowers. *Eremophila laanii* could be useful, though I find it hard to find suitable branches. *Eremophila saligna*, with its fresh foliage and white flowers could find a place in the filler market.

These observations have been made from my own experiences and those of members of the Floral Art Group, including one who has a successful florist business. There are many other eremophilas that could be used as cut flowers, these are just a few that stand out.

Cherree Densley - Killarney, Vic (June 16, '98)

.... I have been busy keeping a track of what eremophilas were in flower for the first six months of this year (it is part of my 10 best for each week which has been appearing in the SGAP Victoria Newsletter). I have put all plants mentioned in an alphabetical listing in a spreadsheet, mainly because it was getting more difficult to remember what I had listed and because some plants, such as eremophilas, were starting to repeat flowering. It has been very interesting to see just when my eremophilas flowered, as most people think of them as SPRING flowering.

The flowering is not just confined to the weeks listed, indeed *E. ovata* has been in flower for four months. I have not recorded the length of the flowering - perhaps next year: it has taken me a lot of effort to keep my general listing going every week.
Correas appear more often than any other genus, but eremophilas come second, followed by grevilleas, then melaleucas, however, spring hasn't started yet and I do have a lot of acacias and callistemons, so the 'popularity poll' could well see a change in the ratings. It's been good fun doing the list and I hope I can inspire other SGAP members to do something similar.

Plants are growing on black volcanic soil over tuffa (fused limestone) rock, 2km from the beach. Eremophilas are mostly grown in raised beds of soil, no added sand or other material - mulched to keep the weeds down.

1	*Eremophila* Summertime Blue'		Week ending March 14
2.	*Eremophila abietina*		Week ending Jan 17
3.	*Eremophila alternifolia* 'White'		Week ending Feb 14
4.	*Eremophila debilis*		Week ending Jan 17 (berries in June)
5.	*Eremophila drummondii* x *nivea*	G	Full bud, end of June
6.	*Eremophila gilesii*	G	Week ending March 7
7.	*Eremophila glabra* 'Prostrate Burgundy'		Week ending June 13
8.	*Eremophila glabra* 'Prostrate Red'		Week ending March 7
9.	*Eremophila glabra* 'Murchison River'	G	Week ending Jan 24

10.	*Eremophila latrobei*	G	Week ending June 6
11.	*Eremophila maculata*		Week ending Feb 21
12.	*Eremophila maculata* 'Pale Pink'		Week ending April 4
13.	*Eremophila maculata* 'Prostrate Yellow'		Week ending June 20
14.	*Eremophila maculata* 'Yellow'		Week ending April 18
15.	*Eremophila maculata* var. *brevifolia*		Full bud/some flowers late June
16.	*Eremophila microtheca*		Week ending May 23
17.	*Eremophila nivea*	G	Week ending Jan 31; budding late June
18.	*Eremophila oldfieldii*	G	Week ending March 7; again June 14
19.	*Eremophila ovata*	G	Week ending Feb 7
20.	*Eremophila platycalyx*	G	Week ending Feb 28
21.	*Eremophila psilocalyx*	G	Full bud, end of June
22.	*Eremophila purpurascens*		Week ending Feb 28
23.	*Eremophila racemosa*		Week ending Feb 14
24.	*Eremophila santalina*		Week ending Feb 7/second lot June 13
25.	*Eremophila viscida* 'White'	G	Week ending April 4
26.	*Eremophila viscida* 'Pink'	G	Week ending May 9

The symbol G indicates that the plants are grafted.

Russell Wait - Piangil, Vic (June 10, '98)

Adding to the report in the last Newsletter, I only have a few more eremophilas to add to the list of what I saw on my trip to Western Australia last year.
Eremophila hughesii was a small, open shrub with blue to pinkish flowers. The *Eremophila gilesii* seen had leaves which varied from long and fine to very short, grey to green and the flowers ranged from white to pink, but were mostly blue. They put on some good shows with their massed displays.

Eremophila 'spinescens' was a very open, spindly shrub, growing in country that looked a bit saline. (The tape had run out when this was found). It has not been propagated.

Found growing with *E. cuneifolia*, which had many differently coloured calyces and looking very colourful, was a possible hybrid with *E.* 'accrescens'. This plant was about 1.5m high by 2.0m wide, with pale blue flowers, large calyx, greyish leaves that were larger and not so rigid as the *E.* 'acrescens' that I know.

Eremophila 'petrophila', a very open, spindly and weeping shrub had whitish flowers. It was about 3.0m high by 2.0m wide, growing on rocky outcrops: it has not been propagated.

Eremophila 'occidens', 1.7m high by 1.0m wide, had blue flowers, with the leaves green on top and grey underneath. It was growing in thick scrub country and hard to see unless in flower; it too has not been propagated.

My seed propagation report this year was started on 15th March 1998 by soaking most of the seeds for 48 hours in water. Two were soaked for 96 hours, but these did not come up as well and were slower to germinate.

The main lot of seeds were soaked for 48 hours and smoked for one to twelve hours. Fifty five lots altogether were used, comprised of thirty from the garden, of which 13 have germinated and 25 collected in the wild, of which 13 have germinated, and of that four are *E. maculata*, two are *E. drummondii*, two are *E. macdonnellii* and two are *E. willsii*.

The next lots were only soaked for 48 hours; there were seventeen lots and all garden collected. From these 4 have germinated, but are growing better than those which were smoke treated. With the same lots of seed which were smoke treated, there are ten lots up. In the comparison:

	NOT SMOKED	SMOKED
E. pustulata	2	1
E. metallicorum	6	2
E. granitica	17	3

A form of *E.glabra* collected by Ray Isaacson, with orange flowers in tight clumps, produced the same numbers as for *E. granitica*, but the seedlings from the unsmoked seed are growing better.

I had started to write this report when I had to go and check on something: I found that there are three seedlings of *E. viscida* just coming up, so this will not be the end of the story.

Leaves are burnt on the top of the pot and then watered in.

Jan Hall - Yarrawonga, Vic

This note is a short response to the request for any information on experiences using eremophilas as cut flowers. I'm sure many a well organised cut flower producer could have a year long range with drip watering and a regular fertiliser programme. This does not happen in my garden, so drought, cold, wet periods, competition and severe frosts all take their toll. A nice, sandy loam would help too.

My flower offerings would, however, be meager without the silver foliage, with flower bonus, of *E. glabra*, "Murchison Magic"- more vigorous here as a grafted plant. Also outstanding for longish stems of silver foliage is another *E. glabra*, which we call "undulate leaf form"; it has greenish-yellow flowers.

In July I've often used *E. youngii* in church vases; it is unaffected by frost. Several forms of *E. maculata* are useful, including "Winter Gold", var. *brevifolia*, and an upright, red-spotted flower.

Eremophila oppositifolia suffers from cold and frost here, but plants in a sheltered, open igloo have lovely stems of the deep pink and the purple form.

I have supplied all of these, plus *E. nivea*, to a Gippsland grower, but have had no feedback. Apparently others are growing them there and in more moderate climates.

Lyndal Thorburn - Queanbeyan, NSW

..... we bought a lot of eremophilas at the ASGAP Conference. They all got home safely, but spent summer in the igloo because it was so hot and dry; we were worried they would expire if we planted them out. (We had ten year old trees die.) I don't think we lost any of the established eremophilas though.

Then it rained at Easter and we started to worry about things going mouldy over winter, so we planted a lot out in tubs in May and so far they are all doing well and seem to be withstanding the frosts, (several minus 5 ^{o}'s overnight recorded in Canberra this season, but so far we haven't had less than minus 2 ^{o} C.) Our dam has frozen over several times.

We have 'heaps' in flower at present, including *E. decipiens,* and *E. youngii*, which look great next to each other. The yellow flowered form of *E. maculata* has a few flowers; *E. maculata* "Pink Mini" is a mass of buds, as is our pale flowered *E. oppositifolia.* I especially like *E. glabra* var. *viridiflora* in winter because its green flowers stand out against the darker foliage. We have several *E. maculata* var. *brevifolia* too, their bright pink flowers are also shown very well. They are sitting next to *E. glabra* "Kalbari Carpet" which is also in full flower.

Merv Hodge - Logan Reserve, Q

I have had many years experience at grafting native plants, but did not concentrate on eremophilas because I believed that the humidity of our summers in SE Queensland was detrimental to their survival. Whilst I believe that is still the case with some of them, others trialled over the past few years have given encouraging results.

My wife and I have a small production nursery specialising in grafting natives and we have received some demand for grafted eremophilas, particularly *E. nivea*. My first attempts were mediocre, but we can now achieve a very good success rate with cutting grafts with that species. Whilst we can achieve good results using *Myoporum acuminatum* rootstock, we get better results using the hybrid *E. bignoniiflora* x *E. polyclada*. I find that it gives a better graft with less inclination to shoot below the graft. The hybrid seems to be quite reliable, particularly in heavy soils with adequate moisture. In searching through reference books I can find no mention of its use as a rootstock. Has anyone tried it and are there any known long-term problems?
(I have no knowledge of its use, perhaps someone could comment! A number of eremophilas were used in the early stages of grafting, including *E. glabra* and *E. maculata*, but they were found to be rather unsuitable due to their woodiness as they aged, and grafts did not take to the stock very well. Colin.)

I believe that it was discovered many years ago by the late Harvey Shaw who first introduced me to grafting native plants. For many years the hybrid was grafted onto *M. acuminatum* in the mistaken belief that it needed grafting.

I have experimented with rootstocks *M. ellipticum*, *M. acuminatum* and *M. montanum*. We had incorrectly believed *M. acuminatum* to be *M. insulare* for many years.

The next Federal Conference/Seminar will be held in Brisbane in July 1999 and it is hoped to have an informal meeting of the Grevillea Study Group members at my home on the Saturday after the closure for members not attending the Post-Conference tours. Eremophila Study Group members would also be welcome.

SEMINAR/WORKSHOP

The response to this event has been excellent, to the point that I must inform you that **no further applications can be accepted** for this weekend.

Altogether we have in excess of fifty people registered; this is somewhat in excess of our initial estimates. We are limited in the facilities that can be offered, and the accommodation in Warracknabeal is all but full. There happens to be a Nurses' Reunion in the town on the same weekend.

Thanks to all who have indicated their interest. You will by now have received a letter advising you of details of the programme and the accommodation booked for you, if you requested it. **If you returned a slip saying that you wanted to attend and have NOT received a letter from me in the past fortnight or so please contact me urgently.** I do not believe that I have omitted anyone, but accidents can happen.

It is our intention to publish some of the relevant material presented at the seminar, so that all members of the Study Group can be informed. This will appear over the next couple of issues.

A very great thankyou is extended to Norma Boschen and Maree Goods for organizing the event.

We may be able to organise another such function in another location sometime in the future, but these events don't just happen.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

You will find your receipt with this Newsletter if you forwarded payment since receiving notice that your subscriptions were due this time round. Thankyou for your prompt response.

EREMOPHILAS FOR THE GARDEN

This small publication is selling very well, I have already had orders for almost 200 via the Study Group, thanks to you the members, and to the members of SGAP through the ASGAP Website and the articles and review in the March issue of *Australian Plants*. We are indebted to Bill Payne for his support via *Australian Plants* and to Brian Walters for his ASGAP Website material. Quite a number of requests for the book have come via these two sources.

Each book sold is putting a minimum of $2 into our Study Group funds, so this should ensure that our subscriptions will stay at the low price of $2 for some time to come. You can support the sale further by recommending it to friends, other SGAP'ers, Libraries etc. There are still plenty more to sell, and I have already sent off two sizable orders to one State Society for resale. Although they are available from SGAP - SA Region, sales we are able to make benefit the Study Group directly.

The price of the book is $9.50, postage included.

Someone, I hope jokingly, asked when was I intending to get the next one published. This was about a month after the book was launched at the ASGAP Conference last September. My response was, I believe, in the same jocular tone.

Colin Jennings

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