

Association of Societies for Growing Australian Plants
EREMOPHILA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER No 69

December 1999

Once again I find myself in a position of wondering how I am going to produce a Newsletter which is both informative and of real value to you the members of the Study Group. I have received very few articles and I am afraid that if this continues I will be forced into reducing the number of issues to two per year. This would be a great pity, for we have as a group been, in the past, quite active and I have in the main received good response to requests for articles for publication in the Newsletter.

The Study Group is a forum for exchange of ideas and the promotion of cultural practices for the betterment of each other's growing techniques, as well as for providing to the wider public a better understanding of the cultivation of this unique genus. I receive quite a few phone calls and letters asking for information about the eremophilas in general and from these we do get a number of new members, but it is important to make sure that the Study Group stays active and productive in its output. I get the impression that there are many who are very willing to receive information etc., but rather shy when it comes to putting something into the total programme. I do not wish to appear too negative, but each time I start to prepare a Newsletter, I shudder to think how much I can extract from letters to make it a valuable product. Having got that off my chest, I do thank, very sincerely, those who have written and provided material for this and past Newsletters - your contributions are most welcome.

I have managed to send out seven lots of cutting material to members who had requested it, unfortunately it was a little later than I had originally anticipated, but there was very little material on display at the SA Region's Spring Show and what has been a useful source of cutting material in the past was not this time available, however, thanks to Bob Chinnock, in his absence, I was able to get some material from his garden, thanks to his daughter. This, coupled with cuttings from my own collection, allowed for a reasonable selection to be sent out.

If anyone is wanting cuttings in the next lot, probably towards the middle of February, would you please let me know what you might want - I cannot guarantee everything will be available and many of the rarer species are still not in cultivation or have only reached very small proportions and not suited to removing cuttings from yet. It is hoped that more of these will be distributed to members over the next few years, in order that a wider range of growing conditions are trialed and reported on.

Colin Jennings

ABC'S 'GARDENING AUSTRALIA'

Two programmes in as many months carrying segments dealing with eremophilas is a bit unusual, however it has happened. In early October the garden of Colin and Ann Dealtry at One Tree Hill in SA was featured; although not dealing specifically with eremophilas, one or two species were shown in the presentation. Closer to the Study Group though was the programme shown on November 19th, featuring the garden of Alice Aisthorpe and her husband. Alice had written to me prior to the event and so I was ready for it, although I think that the dates differed. Both presented native plants in a very good light and, I hope, let a few more people know of the genus *Eremophila*.

ASGAP STUDY GROUP MEETING/BRISBANE

Unfortunately I was not able to attend the ASGAP Conference held in Brisbane last July, and as a result was not present at the Meeting of the Study Group Leaders. At the time of preparing the last Newsletter I did not have the minutes of that meeting, but now that I have them I can briefly report on the outcomes and recommendations.

Firstly we welcome Jan Sked back to the position of ASGAP Study Group Co-ordinator; Jan held this position about six years ago, and is a very active person to have in this position.

I understand that Neil Marriott stood in as a representative for the Eremophila Study Group at this meeting, and I thank Neil for doing this.

It seems as if the question of communication has been raised yet again, this does not just occur at the global level, but seems to occur more locally. A Conference of Study Group Leaders was proposed for the year 2001, to be held in Canberra. The conference a number of years back proved to be valuable.

From the meeting of the ASGAP Council, several motions were adopted which could impinge upon Study Groups: the ones which apply directly to you, the members of the Study Group, are:-

* Member societies of ASGAP are asked to allocate membership numbers to their members, in this way, members applying to join a Study Group could list their membership number when they apply (all members of Study Groups must first be members of an ASGAP member society.)

* ASGAP included in its by-laws, that Study Group Leaders should require applicants for membership or renewal of membership to state their region, their membership number, if allocated, and the expiry date of membership. (I will have to apply this from now on to comply.)

Colin Jennings

FROM YOUR LETTERS

Beverly Rice, Truro - SA

In the Truro/Dutton area we have had a very dry winter and experienced a number of heavy frosts. A number of eremophilas were affected - well established plants, such as *E. christophori* (tops of plants burnt black 50cm.) *Eremophila oppositifolia*, 50-60cm high were dead to ground level. *Eremophila strongylophylla* was also burnt off to ground level. Ninety five percent of the April 1999 purchases, grafted eremophilas, were burnt off - some of these are reshooting below the graft (myoporum stock.)

But again, never be in a hurry to put eremophilas on the compost heap! I was about to remove the 'dead' 50-60cm established plants, but noticed fresh growth at the base! All but one recovered - but then of course not so far the April plantings, they are definitely compost material.

Fortunately we have now had good spring rains and most plants have responded well.

(Beverly adds as a foot-note that she had intended to contact me earlier this year and suggest that we make a visit to her area in October. Perhaps a visit in 2000 could be organised! She refers to not only her own collection, but also the wild growing eremophilas to be found on the roadside between her property and Morgan on the River Murray; there is an excellent stand of *Eremophila maculata*, growing near to Morgan, as well as several other species, including *E. scoparia*, *E. oppositifolia* and *E. alternifolia*. This location has also been suggested by Ken Warnes on another occasion to me; the only problem is that this area does not offer a lot of accommodation facilities and if we were to operate a Study Group Meeting, it would have to be organised so that an overnight stay might be needed in the Barossa Valley somewhere - this is only a few kilometres away from Beverly's property. Beverly has suggested that we could camp there. **(Interest in this is invited from Study Group Members.)**

Ian Jardine, Maryborough -Victoria

Just a short note re Newsletter #68. I have recently used smoke water on old drupes of eremophilas and placed them under mist on a heated bed. After a couple of weeks I had three seedlings, one *E. abietina* and two *E. serpens*, no others have shown. They were all soaked for 6 hours and were not split. I feel (after reading the Newsletter) that they should have been split, and the larger ones soaked longer.

(Ian also goes on to say that he will try some more in the future and will split the drupes, and possibly try the addition of GA {giberellic acid} to the smoke water. We look forward to his future reports.)

Alice Aisthorpe, Roma - Queensland

You mention in your last Newsletter, Dave Gordon, Myall Park - well I've been down there twice this August. The first time to be there for a 'Bird Day' and we stayed for a week in the quarters (bunk style

and very comfortable). We saw lots of kinds and the hakeas were all out in bloom - unbelievable. However, I couldn't find *E. biserrata* (we have been to Myall Park many times and the eremophilas are old friends), and as the area has been slashed I was aghast at the thought of it having been gone. It is different to the one sold in the trade. However, going down a few weekends later for the 'big celebration' of Dave's 100th Birthday to assist a friend, Diane Akers, who was doing a talk on Eucalypts and Eremophilas, we did another scout around and with four of us on the track we found it again, very much smaller and looking endangered, but there all the same. What a relief.

This is the same *E. biserrata* which Lance Cockburn also used to grow - (did the old friends exchange plants I wonder?) It's too late to ask either of them now as Lance has passed onto the Great Garden in the Sky and Dave is finding it difficult to remember. Lance's daughter, however, thinks this is what might have happened. It also grows nicely in my garden, so hopefully together we will keep it going.

Diane did a wonderful job with her talk and promoted eremophilas nicely. She also sold many plants. Diane has a wonderful affinity with eremophilas and we all call her the 'Eremophila Queen' up here. Her nursery, at Charleville, is a treat to visit; on her property she has many eremophilas just growing wild. In August the place is a treat.

We've been busy promoting eremophilas ourselves too. We have a segment coming up on the ABC Gardening Australia programme. The team came out and spent a whole day doing the interviews and filming. Mind you, I believe the segment will only last four minutes, so don't blink! Still I think that they will have *E. nivea* on.

It's just so very dry again, even the eremophilas look as if they need a drink. The wheat crop has failed and so has the harvest. I've told the eremophilas to do what I do and get down and pray, but they assured me that they were already on their knees. Well happy times will come again and at least they flowered astoundingly with no rain to blight the flowers.

Cherree Densley, Killarney - Victoria

The growth of the eremophilas in the garden has been extraordinarily fast this year, despite the low rainfall and flowering has been almost continuous. The honeyeaters are constantly in the eremophilas.

After planting and waiting for about three years, two plants in the eremophila bed of *Pittosporum phillyreoides* are flowering. I thought that they would make good companion plants for eremophilas as they are frequently seen in 'eremophila country'. I don't think that they will get too dense and deprive the eremophilas of sunshine.

If ever members travel towards Melbourne and go through Bacchus Marsh, between Ballarat and Melbourne, **do call in to the Darley Gardens**, mentioned in the Victorian Newsletter (Sept) pages 14/15 - the eremophilas are truly wonderful and are very healthy. It would make a good outing/venue for an eremophila workshop some time as there appears to be lots of really rare ones growing strongly. I think that Phil Vaughan gave the Gardens many grafted plants several years ago and they have done extremely well.

ACRA

It may be that you do not know what this stands for, but it is a very important authority which plays a significant part in recognising and maintaining the registration of plant cultivars, including Australian natives. The ASGAP representative on The Australian Cultivation Registration Authority is Neil Marriott, himself a member of our Study Group. Neil, among others, has for some time been encouraging growers and breeders to register their selected cultivars. Members of Study Groups can do this free of charge; there are procedures which need to be followed and if anyone is interested in having any of their selected eremophilas, species or hybrids registered then they should contact me and I will pass on the information to Neil for action or response.

We are all well aware of the assigning of names, sometimes flippantly, to species and hybrid plants which have been wild collected, simply as a sales 'gimmick' by some who not prepared to follow the

accepted procedure. The colour label, together with a 'catchy name' sells. These names then stick and unfortunately become a real menace.

ACRA is currently compiling a data base of all known native plant cultivar names; this will include all cultivars, ACRA registered, PBR registered and those which are currently unregistered. It is an important project by ACRA and ASGAP. The State ACRA representatives are being asked to compile a listing for their region within the next twelve months, with those listings being sent to Canberra for action.

Selections from the wild will no longer be accepted for registration by the PBR Office. In future it will be up to the applicant to prove that they actually bred their cultivar, and that it was not merely a selection from the wild. ACRA is responding by promoting ACRA registrations as a cheap and simple alternative, which while not providing legal protection, still registers the new cultivar name, and its breeder/selector.

It was pointed out that ASGAP groups are still only lodging limited cultivars for registration under the free scheme for ASGAP and its affiliated groups. All Study Groups are strongly urged to get their good selections registered.

Colin Jennings

WANTED

Denise Winning, from Stirling North (near Port Augusta) in South Australia has asked if anyone is able to provide cuttings and/or seed of the two species *E. mitchellii* and *E. sturtii*. She is well aware of the 'weed' potential of the former, but believes that it would not be too much of a problem.

Anyone who can help please contact Colin for details.

EREMOPHILAS FOR THE GARDEN/NEWSLETTERS

I still have a number of copies of the publication *Eremophilas for The Garden*, these at a cost of \$9.50 posted anywhere in Australia. There are also back copies of the Study Group Newsletters available at a cost of 50cents each, and the edited Newsletters, #1-#31, in booklet form at a cost of \$8.75; both of these inclusive of postage.

WEB SITES

Regional ASGAP members have now got their own Web Sites. I have listed them below.

ASGAP	http://farrer.riv.csu.edu.au/ASGAP/
AUSTRALIAN PLANT ONLINE	http://farrer.riv.csu.edu.au/ASGAP/apoline.html
CANBERRA	http://www.anbg.gov.au/sgap/
TASMANIA	http://www.trump.net.au/~joroco/sgaptas-index.htm
NSW	http://www.ozemail.com.au/~sgap/
VICTORIA	http://www.vicnet.net.au/~sgapvic/
SA	http://www.iweb.net.au/~aps
WA	http://www.ozemail.com.au/~wildflowers
QLD	www.gu.edu.au/school/hsc/sgap/sgaphome.html

If you know of any other sites which may be of value to Study Group members, please let Colin know and they will be published in a future Newsletter.

PRINTING

This, and the next two Newsletters will probably be printed on the photocopier we have here at home, and as a result the pages are stapled, since we do not have A3 facilities on the machine. When Bob returns, we should return to having it done at the Gardens.

Leader: Colin Jennings, 4 Kinnaird Crescent, Highbury, SA 5089
Editor: Bob Chinnock, Botanic Gardens North Terrace, Adelaide, SA 5000