

Association of Societies for Growing Australian Plants
ERMOPHILA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER NO. 70

April 2000

Thankyou to those who have contacted me in the past few months with information which I can use in the Newsletter for all to read. It is always gratifying to get some response to a request for something.

I would, however, still like to receive more thoughts from a wider cross section of the Study Group. It is most important if this Group is to be productive and in the broader sense seen to be providing something of value for the wider audience as well as our limited membership, that we need to record our thoughts and opinions as well as documenting our successes and failures in the culture of eremophilas.

About a month ago I received a phone call from a person in WA. This person had tried to find information about eremophilas growing in his state via the traditional library sources and was most disappointed to find that there was little reference to many of the 'newer' species, particularly those which are currently being sold in the trade, and which have no information, other than a name tag, supplied with the plants when purchased. This supply of information about a plant from the nursery is another issue and not one which we as a Study Group can probably address; some do it well, others poorly. I explained to him the situation with regard to publications etc., and answered a number of his questions using the information written in past Newsletters, as well as through information I held through my contact with the plants and the people who grow them - yourselves. A letter to him, which I must say took a bit of research through back issues, I think satisfied his enquiries. Had I not had this information in the Newsletters, I could not have done what I was asked.

The point I wish to make via this is that the more we can put to paper, the more we can make the information, resulting from our STUDY, available to others who might wish to learn more about the genus.

From time to time extracts are taken from the Newsletters by societies for their own publications. I am sure that the editors of these would like to be able to pass on the information which you have given or could be giving in the future and we in turn would then have a much wider audience as a direct result. It really is up to us as a Group to pass on as much as we can.

I have also been asked if it would be possible to have some more artwork, similar to that which we presented a couple of years ago. This is not possible at the moment since all of the artwork previously used was done by the Herbarium artist here in Adelaide, with permission for reproduction coming from the relevant people. Until Bob Chinnock returns we do not have the same access to this resource. If there are any members who have a flair for this type of thing, I would be only too pleased to receive it and use it in future issues of the Newsletter. Drawings would need to be in black ink or dark pencil, to make it easier to cut in directly to the page. Any offers?

SUBSCRIPTIONS

**IF YOU HAVE A RED SPOT
ATTACHED TO THE TOP RIGHT HAND CORNER
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION NEEDS TO BE RENEWED
BY
JUNE 30TH 2000
OTHERWISE THIS WILL BE YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER.
SUBSCRIPTION RATES \$2 PER YEAR**

POST EREMOPHILA SEMINAR, OCTOBER 1998

Quite apart from the educational and social interest I enjoyed during the seminar weekend, like most others, the opportunity was there to take away plant material of many *Eremophila* species for propagation purposes. Those present remember tables laden with dozens of species to take samples of while the rain bucketed down outside.

Let me state from the beginning that I am no expert propagator, with no commercially made polyhouse, soil heating, automatic misting etc. I just fiddle around with basic equipment - a small home-made cold frame, shadecloth in summer. Hosing is necessary and a bit of care with the soil mix. I have had some success using 5 parts of washed, coarse river sand, combined with about 2 parts of sieved potting mixture. I have also found the Debco propagation medium to give quite good results. The eremophila samples I prepared as cuttings (10 or 12 of each species), were treated with Clonex Red.

Those I found easiest to strike included two forms of *E. maculata* (Yatpool and Regina Avenue), passed on to me by Frank Fitzpatrick. Both appear to be quite vigorous and should do well in my Horsham garden. Others to strike well were *E. denticulata* x *E. glabra*, *E. decipiens* subsp. *linearifolia*, *E. racemosa* (white flowered form), *E. drummondii* x *E. nivea*, *E. drummondii* (both white and purple flowered forms), *E. biserrata*, and *E. maculata* var. *brevifolia*. The latter plant, courtesy of Keith & Norma Boschen, has larger, brighter magenta flowers than I have seen on other plants of the same name. Leaves were oblanceolate, to about 1.5cm in length.

Slightly more difficult were a soft pink flowered form of *E. maculata*, *E. metallicorum*, *E. crassifolia*, and *E. youngii*. Those I had no success with were many, including *E. drummondii* (ground cover), *E. battii*, *E. sargentii*, *E. enata*, *E. dichroantha* and *E. purpurascens*.

Graham Lay - Horsham, Victoria

NOTES ON EREMOPHILAS IN HORSHAM

I live on a small house block in Horsham, western Victoria. I have found that one of the 'problems' of belonging to a Study Group such as ours is that we are exposed to so many plant species, cultivation ideas and propagating techniques, that there is not the room in my garden to do what I would like to do. As it is, some of the lawn and vegetable garden have had to be sacrificed for eremophila plantings. (I think that this is a perennial problem for all gardeners, the lawns, clotheslines, fruit trees and vegetable gardens seem to go in about that order. Ed.)

The soil is grey, moderately alkaline, Wimmera clay. The climate is typically Mediterranean, hot dry summers and cool moist winters. Annual rainfall is about 475mm.

Eremophila nivea, *E. racemosa* and *E. 'Summertime Blue'* were planted at about the same time two years ago and are thriving in an open, raised bed. All are just over a metre tall, well rounded shrubs without staking, although 'Summertime Blue' is beginning to sprawl somewhat. *Eremophila nivea* is one of my favourites and makes an eye-catching spectacle with its masses of mauve flowers against the grey foliage.

I have had a prostrate, orange/red flowered form of *E. glabra* well established in my garden for about a decade. It has dark green, ovoid, viscous leaves and originated from a cutting given to me by Norma Boschen. It forms a dense ground cover, is facing north, but protected from the west by a low fence. It is about 2m in diameter and is a very hardy plant, which flowers in summer.

Eremophila weldii is one of the gems of my garden, the three plants I have are less than half a metre tall. It seems hardy to dry periods and moderate frost and grows in full or part sun. It is easy to propagate from cuttings. *Eremophila complanata* is about a metre tall, with masses of pink flowers from spring through to early summer. It is growing under a small *Eucalyptus sessilis*, facing north. It establishes on its own roots from cuttings and grows quickly.

Eremophila maculata 'Bluey' is a hardy shrub with mauve to purplish flowers. The flowers on my shrub are larger and deeper in colour than other I have seen.

Eremophila alternifolia was taken as a cutting from a plant growing along the Sundown Nature Track just north of Broken Hill. This plant is about a metre tall, with attractive bright pink flowers. In the garden it became a bit leggy as other plants around it grew, but it prunes well. It is growing in a raised bed with a clay base, which is quite different from the shaley soil of its provenance.

Eremophila splendens grows naturally in the Shark Bay area of WA. My plant was obtained from Phillip Vaughan's, Mount Cassell Nursery, near the Grampians. An upright, green, hairy leafed shrub, it is now almost a metre tall after about 18 months. Flowers are a bright orange, reminiscent of some of the forms of *E. glabra* and it contrasts beautifully with the foliage. The plant receives afternoon sun where it is planted.

Graham Lay - Horsham, Victoria

ASGAP RULES & BYLAWS

I have recently received the most up to date set of Rules and By-laws of ASGAP. Whilst most of them are procedural and relate to the ASGAP organisation at large, and do not affect the normal running of the Study Group, in fact we comply with them now, there is one which I believe I should make all members of the Study Group aware:-

Leaders (of Study Groups) should require applicants for membership or renewal of membership to state their Region, their membership number if allocated and the expiry date of Region membership.

In this regard, I ask that you do inform me of your membership when next you renew - I am well aware that many of you have paid up for the next five or so years, so it could be some time before I hear from you on this matter.

EREMOPHILA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER INDEX

You may recall that I mentioned several issues back that Bob Drummond was in the process of completing an index for the Eremophila Study Group's Newsletters. I also put together an index using the hand-written copy which Bob handed to me at the Seminar in the Wimmera in 1998. I received a hard copy and a disk from Bob to have a look at just after Christmas.

From Bob's effort and my, slightly different format, I am sure that we will be able to put an index in place for the first issue for the next subscription year, due out in August 2000.

The format I have used is a two column arrangement and it can be printed out on less than four pages, inclusive of the usual notes of explanation etc.

FROM YOUR LETTERS

Roselyn McDonagh - Stanthorpe, Queensland

(Following the arrival of the package of cuttings sent late last year, Roselyn wrote:-)

"The last lot of cuttings did not do so well (unfortunately due to deliveries to our address occurring only three times a week). I planted them into our own recipe potting mix which is pretty good for natives; I use it to plant out *Eucalyptus pulverulenta* seedlings which we grow on our property.

Some died immediately, some hung on for a while then died, but it seemed as though there were those which took off right from the start. I will endeavour to give you the names of the successes in the future.

PS Our *Eucalyptus* plants are being eaten by Christmas Beetles. Would there be any very perfumed eremophilas we could use as companion planting to confuse the beetles' smelling powers?"

(Any ideas about the companion planting? I suggested that *E. microtheca* is very strongly smelling, but have no idea about its capabilities with regard to distracting beetles from attacking eucalypts. Colin)

Lyndal Thorburn - Queanbeyan, New South Wales

Some of the plants we bought in Adelaide (at the ASGAP Conference held there in 1998) are now doing well and seem to be frost hardy here. We have planted them in tubs as usual as we could move them if necessary. Mind you, last winter was mild. The ones which have done best are *E. bipinnatifida*, *E. fraseri*, and *E. densifolia*. All have flowered this spring. I have just taken cuttings as we think they will be OK in the garden. We have *E. ternifolia* in a tub too, but growth has been at the tips, with the older stems dying off. This is the trouble we have with *E. ovata*, which we have decided is not suitable for the Canberra climate.

It has been interesting watching the birds this spring. Our two most favoured eremophilas are *E. glabra* var. *viridiflora* and *E. calorhabdos*. Both of these are visited by the Eastern Spinebill and the *E. calorhabdos* by bigger birds such as the Noisy Friarbird and Red Wattlebirds. These regularly break branches so the plant gets ever more lop-sided.

We had rain in December of course - 130mm, more than double the monthly average. This has caused many of our grey-leafed eremophilas, particularly *E. macdonnellii* and *E. georgei*, to look rather sad with black mould on lower branches, but they seem to have improved in the week since the rain cleared.

We have an *E. drummondii* x *E. nivea* doing well in the garden and have propagated it for our local SGAP group. Unfortunately the nursery from where we bought it simply put labels for both parents on the offspring, so we don't know which parental characteristics it will follow, i.e. height etc. It has upright, linear leaves like *E. drummondii*, but they are rather furry, and purple flowers. If you know what its ultimate height and width are meant to be, I'd be pleased to know as SGAP can then update their database. I am in a group in Canberra that is preparing a new edition of Australian Plants for Canberra Gardens. We hope to have several species of *Eremophila* listed in it.

Jan Glazebrook - Logan Village, Queensland

Last year we had the most rain we have had since moving to Logan Village in 1992. Most of the garden revelled in the moister conditions, however, the eremophilas were not as happy. I have over 100 species, all but a few are grafted onto *Myoporum acuminatum* rootstock, so they have no problem with root rot, but can not do much about exposure of the foliage to the wet conditions. Grey and hairy leaf species like *E. nivea* and forms of *E. glabra* have a lot of black leaves and leaf drop. I fear that a lot of eremophilas will never be suitable for our climate.

The ones which I recommend are as follows:

E. calorhabdos - needs staking and heavy pruning

E. drummondii

E. georgei - the pink form is very pretty

E. glabra - in its various forms

E. granitica - I have a nice pink form

E. ionantha

E. longifolia - can be grown on its own roots but suckers

E. macdonnellii - fairly short lived, but worth growing for the brilliant flowers

E. maculata - many forms

E. neglecta - has performed well

E. nivea - has its problems, but is a lovely foliage plant

E. oldfieldii

E. subfloccosa - does not seem to have the same problems as the other grey leaf plants

E. viscida - needs staking

I enjoy the Eremophila Newsletters very much as we don't get much news on eremophilas up here. Descriptions of new species with line drawings would be much appreciated.

Norma Boschen - Warracknabeal, Victoria

I'm feeling a bit guilty after reading the Newsletter, I will endeavour to write to you after Christmas. We had a wonderful trip to WA via the Anne Beadell and returning on the Gunbarrel. We also went north to Newman. It was eremophilas all the way - lots of them looked nearly dead - there were good patches. I have a pressed collection and a plant collection. I also collected some seed (I had a permit). We travelled with Jan Hall and Maree Goods along the Anne Beadell, and with Russell Wait for two days. We have to plant out about 80 grafted plants from the trip - I have names for all but 2 or so.

OCTOBER 2000 WEEKEND

Following on from the note in the last Newsletter about a possible weekend in the Truro area, (about 80km north east of Adelaide), based on the property of Beverley Rice, I have had a number of enquiries. Beverley offered to host such a function if there was sufficient interest. Anyone who is interested in such an event is asked to contact me, and depending on the degree of response I will start to make arrangements with Beverley, like dates, times and the usual details necessary to have such an event take place. Please let me know of any unsuitable dates - I know that I will be away for the first three weekends in October. Accommodation in the area is limited, but camping on Beverley's property is a good option. The Barossa Valley is not too far away for those who like the creature comforts of a bed and a solid roof over their heads.

I will need to know by the end of May so that we can get things in motion. Details will be sent to those who express an interest early in June and a general notice will appear in the August issue of the Newsletter, which should give you enough time to plan.

EREMOPHILA PLANTINGS FOR PUBLIC VIEWING

I have been asked on a number of occasions about locations where interested people might be able to visit and see good collections of eremophilas. I am aware of a few, but there must be many which I have not heard of nor have I had the opportunity to visit.

The few that I am aware of which are public places and not tied to nurseries are:

- Arid Lands Botanic Garden, Port Augusta, South Australia (an excellent selection.)
- Galore Hill, via Lockhart, NSW (established by the late Frank Prichard, a member of the Study Group for many years. Plantings were a bit sparse, when I last visited.)
- Olive Pink Reserve, Alice Springs, NT (a good selection, along with other arid land genera.)
- 'Myall Park', Glenmorgan, Queensland (established by Mr David Gordon and more recently as a designated park.)
- Darley Gardens, Bacchus Marsh, Vic. Eremophilas and many rare WA species of other genera.

There are a number of plantings in public places throughout the Mallee area of both SA and Victoria; these have resulted from the enthusiasm of one or two local residents who have an interest in eremophilas. The ones which I have actually seen include:

- Geranium SA, Mildura (Vic) - (several locations), Walpeup (Vic),

There are a number of very good plantings associated with nurseries, these include:

- Pinery Nursery, Pinery, SA (operated by two of our members Peter & Ronda Hall)
- Carawatha Native Garden, Wellington East (via Taillem Bend) SA

If you know of any more, and I am sure that there are many I am unaware of, please drop me a line and fill me in with the details - I will print them in a future issue of the Newsletter. To add a bit more interest perhaps you could give a few details of what we could expect to find there if we took the time out to visit during our trips around the country.

AFTER THE RAINS

Although not receiving the lashings of rain experienced elsewhere, South Australia received very good recordings in the third week in February. This together with the unusually hot weather both before and afterwards, stimulated many seeds of eremophilas to germinate where they had fallen beneath plants. Ken Warnes (Owen, SA) rang to let me know that large numbers of seedling had emerged and that most were unlikely to survive unless there was some follow-up rain. Unfortunately the weather following his call was again very hot, and since that time little or no further rain has fallen. Ken was keen to have people who were interested call in and dig some of the seedlings and transplant them to where they could be given a bit of attention and so increase their chances of survival. Unfortunately the identity of many of the seedlings would be in doubt, since they would have resulted from open pollination and with so many species being grown in his plantation area, there was plenty of scope for hybrids to have resulted. One never knows what the results might be unless the plant is able to survive long enough to give an indication, most reliably via its flower. Perhaps we will hear from Ken in a later Newsletter about the outcome of this chance event.

EREMOPHILAS FOR THE GARDEN & EDITED NEWSLETTERS #1- 31 BOOKLET

There are still a number of *Eremophilas For the Garden* available at a cost of \$8, plus the standard postage rate of \$1.50 to anywhere in Australia. This book deals with about 70 species which have proven to be worthwhile garden subjects, tested in a range of situations and now well established and acceptable species for cultivation. Much of the information provided has been gleaned from experiences reported by Study group members over the years.

Also available are the edited Newsletters (#1-31) - these cost \$6 plus postage \$2.75. This booklet is a convenient way for members who have joined since the late 1980's to obtain the full collection of Newsletters issue by the Study Group, and is a good source of the history of the Group.

Both can be purchased from Colin. All cheques and money orders should be made payable to the Eremophila Study Group.

All past Newsletters from #32 onwards are also available at a cost of 50 cents each, postage included.

I would like to empty my storage cupboards to make way for other things, so please help me!

WEBSITES

Since listing the websites of the ASGAP Societies in the last Newsletter, I notice that there have been a few changes to them, however, I have not had the time to check them all and to make corrections on this occasion. Perhaps members could let me know of any changes they have noted and of any other sites which they have accessed. I could add these to the list for those of you who might like to do a bit of exploration.

CUTTINGS

My apologies to several people who asked for cuttings to be sent to them in the early part of this year. I did not sent them due to some very hot weather over an extended period, and then I simply ran out of time to do the collection and packaging, I will ensure you get what you requested when it is opportune to send cuttings out again, probably in early September. If you can deal with them in the near future, let me know and I can send them, but I would suggest that it would be better in Spring. Sorry for any disappointment and for not letting you know sooner, by letter. **Colin**

Printing of the Newsletter has once again been printed on A4 and stapled, due to it being printed at home.

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