

Association of Societies for Growing Australian Plants
EREMOPHILA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER No. 88

September 2006

Well we now have a lot of good news for those who have been waiting for the release of the book which Bob Chinnock has been working on for so many years. In early June there was a release from the publishers of four pages on their webpage re the publication of the book, its contents and the proposed retail price.

**EREMOPHILA
 AND ALLIED GENERA
 A Monograph of the Myoporaceae
 R.J.Chinnock
 State Herbarium of South Australia**

**ISBN9781877058165
 704 pages, 290 x 210mm,
 335 colour plates,
 300 maps,
 325 line illustrations,
 rrp AUD99.95 hardcover,
 March/April 2007**

These are the release details of the publication which we have all been waiting for. The publishers, Rosenberg Publishing Pty Ltd, website released 4 pages as a promotional. If members wish to visit this site they can do so at: www.rosenbergpub.com

From what I have already seen, both in the pre-print stage and the original manuscript stage, this will be an excellent book: full of invaluable information about the entire Myoporaceae, not just eremophilas. The number of colour illustrations is significant and with the information contained in the text for each species all members should gain a great deal of otherwise unavailable information for their future use. Hopefully it will also enable you to identify the many plants that you have in your collections; many of which have come from sources as unnamed species or with 'tag' names. There should be many growers who now will be able to 'put a name' to that plant in the garden which they thought was 'something else'.

I am also reliably informed that there are yet more new species which have come to light since the manuscript was accepted for printing. That is perhaps a good sign since it means that there is still more to look for when members travel into areas not yet searched, and perhaps in the well-worked locations.

This sizeable publication is not a field guide, but a valuable reference work.

I have been asked by APS Adelaide Region if I would be prepared to look at the possibility of producing another *Eremophilas for the Garden*, either as a new edition of the present book or as a new book. I believe that a new book of approximately the same size as the original, but carrying seventy or so additional species, rather than redoing the current book, despite its few errors or omissions is preferable. There are now very few copies of *Eremophilas for the Garden* left in stock, so when these are sold there will not be any more and it is unlikely that we would do a reprint – costs are so much more now compared with when they were first done. This is still in the 'planning stage', but I will keep you informed when I know more.

Thankyou to all who have sent in their subscriptions. Their receipt early in the month helps to get the banking done in one hit, rather than the payments being paid in small installments. We currently have a membership of approximately 150 members. This makes us one of the biggest of the ASGAP Study Groups and I believe one of the more active ones. I have indicated, again with a red spot, if you have not sent in your subs by the end of August 2006. I omitted to mention in the last Newsletter that the **SUBSCRIPTION is STILL \$5 per year.**

To date I have not received much feed back on the proposed workshop; other than that a couple of members have indicated that they would attend if we were to run one. To date there has been no offer to host it. I am still waiting!

My apologies for only sending out two issues of the newsletter in the last membership year. Time seems to have escaped me. I am involved in a number of other plant-related organisations and it seems that as a volunteer, one

is often called on to do twice the amount of work which one would do in a paid position. I trust that the colour content, initially provided by Hans Griesser and for the last one from my own slide collection, has been welcomed. Thankyou to those who have given some positive feedback about the pictures.

FROM YOUR LETTERS

My apologies to Ainslie Lines & Beverley O'Keefe for not using their letters in the last Newsletter – it seems that I will have to review my filing system.

Ainslie Lines – Ashley, NSW

(Ainslie's first letter came in November 2005, she wrote again in January 2006.)

It is nice to open up the envelope and see a bit of colour. I feel starved sometimes of good pictures of what some eremophilas look like. So many garden books don't mention them.

The village of Ashley is situated on what I call a 'red ridge' in the black soil plains, our soil is some kind of red sandy clay. It enables me to grow many eremophilas that I suspect wouldn't grow well in black clay soil. Also, we've added red gravel and garden loam.

It is interesting too to read of the enthusiasm, success and failures of the Sydney Group. It seems to me that it must have been a bit like that in the early days when people first tried collecting and growing eremophilas. I'm so grateful to those early people.

My first success with a cutting was of an *E. longifolia*, using a hormone powder, in sand mixed with seed raising mixture. It's only small still, about 45cm, and I suspect it will send out suckers eventually, seeing that it does that naturally in the bush near here.

My garden is only five years old and most of my plants are a lot younger than that, so the only eremophilas I have that are over a metre high are *E. polyclada* – one of my favourites, *E. polyclada* x *E. bignoniiflora* is lovely, *E. maculata* with its purple flowers, *E. maculata* 'Wendy' and *E. maculata* 'Aurea' grow well. *Eremophila oppositifolia* var. *rubra*, *E. nivea* (grafted) and two forms of *E. racemosa*, the purple-red and 'Peaches and Cream' all do well for me.

Any problems that I have had with *E. maculata* have been caused by mismanagement of them. I have them in ten colours and growth habits, all growing well. Of these the 'Cerise' is lovely, and *E. maculata* var. *brevifolia* is beautiful. A form called 'Brick' is naturally a nicely shaped plant, while 'Goondiwindi' immediately flopped and spread. 'Wendy' is shapely but bending away a bit from growing in the shade; a purple form grows well.

I have six forms of *E. glabra*. I have trouble with them a bit, caused by dogs, ants and bad positioning. One of them is prostrate, with small pale orange flowers, which is growing better now that it is getting what I consider too much shade. I've taken some cuttings because I expect it will die there. My experience of moving established bushes hasn't been good.

Eremophila 'Summertime Blue' grows better at my mother's place, on black, alkaline soil, than so far on mine, though both its parents grow well here. *Eremophila* 'Kalbarri Carpet' and *E. splendens* are growing well where they get less sunlight than I thought they would get.

I have a grafted *E. hygrophana* that I love, a pretty *E. decipiens*, *E. divaricata*, *E. microtheca* and *E. 'Yanna Road'*: all are growing well.

Eremophila drummondii, growing in almost full sun looks like it needs more shade. I have five others that are new and small, but they are growing OK. They are *E. weldii*, *E. duttonii*, *E. scaberula*, *E. alternifolia* and *E. gibbifolia*. Lastly, *E. debilis*, which grows naturally in my area in both black and red soil; it is growing well in the garden in bright shade – a lovely prostrate plant with beautiful fruits.

I do not have access to a hot house, so use instead, the inside wrappers from breakfast cereal packets. I only use the ones which stand upright on their own; no wires etc. needed to keep them clear of the cuttings etc. The tubes I use for cuttings are supported in empty planter pots (three to a pot), and covered with the cereal packet insert.

(Her second letter in January corrected a few thoughts which she presented in her first letter.)

The day after I wrote the letter I dug a hole for another plant and I was definitely digging into hard packed, red clay. So I finally visited my local department of Agriculture. The lady there didn't have a description for Ashley

exactly, except to say that it is on a red ridge surrounded by black soil plains. As we looked through soil profiles though we came to 'red, sandy clay', which is as I first described it. I had thought that sand and clay couldn't co-exist: that they were on opposite ends of the soil types, but obviously they can and it was as I have observed.

On the 8th December Ashley was under a very damaging hail and wind storm with at least 85mm of rain. I've lost a lot of my young Emu Bushes. Plants that looked OK after the storm, up and died in the next two weeks. Two *E. maculata* 'Winter Gold' died and many more showed signs of new leaf growth, but then died.

The standout survivor was *E. hygrophana* which always seems so delicate to me; it has dead parts on the leading edges, but still flowering. The *E. 'Yanna Road'* has a few dead twigs, the other plant had a bit more damage, but both have continued to flower. I don't quite understand what killed them, except maybe root damage, and what I might have done after the storm to prevent the losses.

In amongst the feeling of devastation at what has happened to my garden is the wonder at what survived and how quickly new leaves are coming back, and as a bird watcher, I delight in the new potential nesting holes for parrots etc. created by the hundreds of branches off the local Brimble Box, Coolibah and River Red Gums in Ashley and the surrounding area.

Beverley O'Keefe – Springsure, Qld

I have been a member of the Eremophila Group for years, but never get around to writing to you. Although I was responsible for compiling the first indexed list of newsletters way back when. I did this for your predecessor, Geof Needham.

Four years ago my husband retired and we moved into the town of Springsure where we built a home and started a garden from scratch. On the whole we have had good success with our plants. We carted soil in to build up the land as we had a fair slope, so it is the same soil as we had at our previous property at Wallalee, with a rather high pH.

However, I am thinking of getting rid of my *E. macdonnellii*! It has grown 1.5m high by 8m across, and a second one is going the same way. I just don't have the room. I keep cutting it back, but it seems to love that.

Other eremophilas doing well for us are: *E. maculata* 'Aurea' (both upright and ground cover forms) *E. bignoniiflora* x *polyclada*, *E. calorhabdos*, *E. decipiens*, *E. divaricata*, various *E. maculata*, *E. weldii* (not so happy here as out 'on the farm'), *E. 'Yanna Road'*. We would be glad to see any Native Plant Lovers who may be wandering through. Eremophilas are only part of our garden and it is not exclusively native.

Ruth & Alan Griinke – Toowoomba, Qld

We have lived here at Gowrie Mountain, halfway between Toowoomba and Oakey, for about thirty three years, and as keen Toowoomba SGAP members have planted many natives over the years on about an acre of our property. We would have planted more if the seasons had been better. The last two years have been worse than ever because it has been very hot and not the best for planting cuttings for replacement.

We planted the first trees about 1976, forming raised beds of stone and sandy loam to plant the smaller shrubs, grevilleas and banksias. We travelled a lot throughout Queensland and New South Wales and up through the centre with our good friends Len Miller & Betty Ballingal, both of whom have now passed on. I think that Len knew where most eremophilas grew in most states.

I think that we have developed a love of eremophilas through our trips and have propagated many from cuttings and purchased many from nurseries in South Australia and Brookvale Park when it was here near Oakey. The nurseries up here only have a limited number of species. We would have nearly a hundred species in our garden with many thriving in our black soil that has no clay under it and in the built up beds.

Some of the eremophilas that are doing well in the black soil, most for five years and some over twenty five years are; forms of *E. maculata*, *E. nivea*, *E. rostrata*, *E. divaricata*, *E. weldii*, *E. youngii* and *E. youngii* var. *lepidota*, *E. subteritifolia*, *E. 'Yanna Road'*, *E. serpens*, *E. linsmithii*, *E. macgillivrayi*, *E. laanii*, *E. decipiens*, *E. pantonii*, *E. platycalyx*, *E. spectabilis*, *E. glabra*, *E. carnososa*, *E. stenophylla*, *E. mirabilis*, *E. glandulifera*, *E. rotundifolia*, *E. freelingii*, *E. paisleyi*, *E. macdonnellii*, *E. gracilis*, *E. mitchellii*, *E. alternifolia*, *E. bignoniiflora*, *E. denticulata*, *E. eriocalyx*, *E. microtheca*, *E. oppositifolia*, *E. racemosa*. *E. 'Summertime Blue'* and *E. lehmanniana*.

The *E. mitchellii* was torn in half by a bad wind storm and had to be cut right back, but has shot out and is almost back to its original height in about four years. I have grown quite a few from cuttings at about 33% success rate

and have no trouble finding homes for them. I have lost *E. gibbifolia*, a twelve year old plant in black soil and one, three years old, from the raised bed, but I think that it was the extreme heat and the dry season. They are not readily available here so I am looking for cutting material.

Arnold Rieck – Rosewood, Qld

Here in West Moreton we've had another dry year to date. There has been no run-off rain into local dams since February 2003.

Through Ipswich SGAP I'm pushing and encouraging folk to plant eremophilas. This morning at church I bucketed some more water around some tubes I have planted there. I hope to plant more as I have them available from my cutting back – partly successful.

Barbara Hannah – Armidale, NSW

Much appreciate your newsletters - (photos)!

Our eremophilas are coping as well as might be expected with the conditions (killer heat, drought, long periods 'extreme' cold...) - especially the broad-leaf types.

Alec Hawtin – Irymple, Victoria

Most of our eremophilas survived the summer heat and drought conditions. But we lost *Correa*, *Boronia* and a *Banksia*.

The pair of peacocks are keeping the monistria locusts down so the eremophilas are not being chewed to pieces, so I have not had to resort to spraying 'Green Gard' that is available I believe from Elders.

Philip Robinson – Mornington, Vic

(Philip, in a recent letter, requested that I put in something about the formation of a group in and around the Melbourne area who could meet in a similar way to those from the Eremophila Study Group who meet in Sydney.)

If any Eremophila Study Group member in the Melbourne area or further afield is interested in meeting from time to time with other eremophila enthusiasts to exchange information and perhaps cuttings and cutting material, could they please contact Philip at the following email address: prob6058@bigpond.net.au

Jan Glazebrook – Logan Village, Qld

We have had a very good year, weather-wise, despite all of the talk of the worst drought for 100 years in South East Queensland. The rain is very coastal and inland is missing out. We have had at least our average annual rainfall and best of all it has been spread evenly, with good rain every month. Our winter was mild and our spring cool, so flowering has been very good for an extended period. Eremophilas along with everything else have flowered well.

Those flowering well so far are *E. miniata*, *E. purpurascens*, *E. latrobei*, *E. spectabilis*, *E. stenophylla*, *E. nivea* and *E. densifolia*, to name but a few. One eremophila that has amazed me is *E. warnesii*. With its heavy, hairy leaves I thought we would have problems in our humid climate, but it has flourished. New growth appears within the bush in winter and the old growth is cut away as it deteriorates.

The Lantana Bugs are again active in the garden. I have found that they have taken a liking to my *Myoporum acuminatum*. I am using the systemic insecticide Confidor® to kill them.

We are continuing to increase our collection. It has had a sudden increase with the arrival home of a friend who visited the Arid Lands Botanic Garden in Port Augusta (SA) and who purchased about 30 new (to me) eremophilas: now I have to graft them!

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