

Association of Societies for Growing Australian Plants  
**EREMOPHILA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER No. 89**

December 2006

I have reprinted the information from the news release relating to the publication of the book *Eremophila and Allied Genera*. Until the actual date of publication is known there is not a lot more that I can pass on to you. I will in the next Newsletter be able to give further details about the purchase of the book, hopefully via the Study Group if that can be arranged.

**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](http://www.rosenbergpub.com)

Thankyou to all who have sent in subscriptions since the last Newsletter, I have included receipts where relevant.

I have received a bit more information about possible workshops. The Wimmera Group of the Victorian APS is to host the Regional Conference in 2008: the suggested theme is Dryland Planting, with eremophilas to be a focus point. Maree Goods contacted me soon after receiving our September Newsletter with some initial information about this event. Details will be given closer to the date and members of the Eremophila Study Group are invited to show expressions of interest. The region has suitable accommodation in a number of nearby towns and the venue for the workshop would be central to these towns. It would be necessary to tie in our arrangements with the Victorian APS in order to maximise the facilities and to provide as much useful material as possible for everyone concerned.

I have also been advised by Maree that there is a proposal for a new book to be published in Victoria, with the help of the APS Victoria and a private interest. Maree has been involved in the initial planning. The book is to focus on dryland plantings, and since eremophilas are a significant part of this scene, they will feature strongly. The book is to focus on the cultivation of the plants rather than on their botanical or specific features which we in the Study Group might focus on; nonetheless the book should provide further information for members of the Study Group. It should provide a lot of help for people wishing to grow such plants in their gardens in the dryer areas. It is still early in the planning and as far as I know there will be some input from several members of the Study Group who have been asked to assist in its preparation. With the current hot, dry seasons experienced across much of the continent, this form of gardening is likely to be in demand for many properties.

Maree has also sent to me a fact sheet which is being used to prepare information for the above mentioned proposed publication to be released in conjunction with the workshop. If any member is interested in helping out with information about specific species, please contact me, and I can pass on the necessary data sheets to fill in. I will also give you details of Maree's address for you to send the material to her directly.

Since writing about the Wimmera meeting I have had a call from Ken Warnes who has offered to open his collection to members of the Study Group sometime in 2007. The date and details are at present not established. It might be possible to hold a one-day gathering at Ken's place and perhaps hold another day's get-together elsewhere. The reason for this is that there are few places for accommodation close to Owen, although if people wished to travel they could stay at Clare or the Barossa, but that would present some logistical problems for organising. It would be possible to organise a second day for a "meeting" in the metro area, but that would depend on the numbers interested and what they were interested in doing on that day.

From nothing we are now flush with ideas! I do not think that the two would clash so we could accommodate both offers; and in any case the Ken Warnes' visit is somewhat flexible, whereas the Regional Conference of the Victorian APS is fixed.

In any case please let me know of your interest now that we have a bit more idea of what is on offer.

Special thanks to Ken Warnes for his articles for this issue. Ken has put together some interesting aspects of the natural occurrence of some of the rarer species in South Australia. For those interested in purchasing Nescofilm® or Parafilm®. Ken has provided some information about the suppliers of these two items. In recent times there have been fewer requests for this material, but when Ken contacted me recently about the possibility of the Study Group purchasing another order, I told him that I had not bothered to do so, due to the so few requests. If there is sufficient demand I will place an order, but I would need to be able to guarantee at least a total of 100m of Nescofilm® (2 rolls) to make it worthwhile. Members wanting me to make an order would advise me if their interest and also the quantity that they would purchase if I placed an order. I do not want to be holding stock over a long period of time.

Maree Goods has supplied a very informative and interesting article about their trip to Western Australia. It is through trips like this that we have in the past been able to locate new species and determine additional sites of species once thought to be localised and in some cases locally very rare. No doubt similar excursions in the future will reveal new gems and add to existing information.

I have included another page of pictures of eremophilas which are now in cultivation but are not commonly seen. My apologies for an error on the last picture page; the spelling should have been *E. malacoides*. For the astute reader you will also have noted that the manuscript names were not written in quotes. I decided, partly by default, to not do so on this occasion, since they are now, 'published', or at least are in the process of so being in the book. Now we will have to start a new, much shorter list of manuscript names for those which missed the book, but which have been identified since the copy went to the printer. Fortunately there are not too many of them.

Due to the increased amount of material received for this Newsletter, I am in the happy position of being able to prepare an eight page Newsletter. Thankyou to all contributors! I trust that for the next one in about April 2007 I will be in the happy position to report similarly. I would need to have articles, notes or letters to me by the middle of March.

### JUST HOW RARE ARE THEY?

I often wonder just how rare are some of these plants we are trying to collect and save. We know from the scientific work that some haven't been collected officially for many years, *E. adenotricha*, *E. parvifolia* and *E. arguta* for over thirty years come to mind, but there are many more that might not be as common as the records may lead us to believe.

A typical example would be the recordings listed as *E. delisseri*; from Leonora to Ooldea the records say. But Bob Chinnock has broken this into four species and so the Leonora-Laverton records refer to what is now *E. malacoides*. Plenty more on the Nullarbor say the records, from Rawlinna to Ooldea. Sorry folks, from Rawlinna to Cook they probably refer to what is now *E. dendritica*. Oh well, there are good records from Ooldea. Not so, at Ooldea there's what is now *E. decussata* and when Russell and I were there in 2003 we could only find six plants and believe me, we looked. In 1969 there were many more but I won't try and guess the number. They're not there now. Suffice to say, from two visits my four plants are all different and as a species it is high among my favourites. There is a report of a disjunct population north of Woomera which needs checking out. So what of *E. delisseri*? When Russell and I went looking for it north of Cook we had three locations. A 1919, or thereabouts, collection from three miles north was nowhere to be found, the 39 mile turned out to be two plants of *E. dendritica* and only at the 42 mile collection did we hit the jackpot. A total of eight plants, and that's it. I'm not saying there are not more but a hovercraft would be the only suitable conveyance to go searching in, preferably after rain to solve the dust problem. A large stand of *E. dendritica* was located a bit further on, but no more *E. delisseri*, the original species. Had we realized their rarity we would have done a population collection, regardless of horticultural value. An intriguing sidelight is that an SGAP party from Eyre Peninsula visited Ooldea in 1971 and I believe sent me cuts of both *E. decussata* and *E. delisseri* but I have been unable to "nail them" on the exact location and Ooldea is much more heavily vegetated than north of Cook. Oh to have our present skills combined with some of the collections of the past!

Not far from home in a small patch of remnant mallee is the only natural plant of what we used to call "the green glabra", now more formally *E. subfloccosa* subsp. *glandulosa*. At one time I had three variants of this including forms from Urania on central Yorke Peninsula and Kulpara on upper Yorke Peninsula. It was also known at Bute, not far from Kulpara and Pinery, near Owen. All these individual plants appeared to have come from soil disturbance associated with road making, survived for a few years and died. For various reasons I lost my plants

and now have only the local one. Yet a few years ago on a local back road the mallee was harvested for the wood and the tops piled up and burnt. In one of the ash piles at least 10 seedlings of this rare plant appeared but none lived beyond two years. Again I was remiss in not at least trying to make a population collection as there was considerable variation among them. So while at times I have known of other local individuals, as well as that patch, it's now back to a sole plant which is being propagated to save the clone. Yet this plant must have been quite widespread, it's 120km from here to Urania and by the numbers in that ash pile, it could at times have been prolific, perhaps briefly after fire or drought.

In a previous Newsletter I described the prostrate Gawler form of *E. glabra*, the only known plant gone forever but for our endeavours. There are plenty more examples of just how rare and endangered some of these plants have become and how close to extinction many of them really are.

Ken Warnes

### GRAFTING TAPE

Information on grafting tape (supplied by Russell Wait and Ken Warnes).

NESCOFILM is supplied by Interpath, free-phone 1800 626 369. Melbourne phone number 03 9457 6277: email is [info@interpath.com.au](mailto:info@interpath.com.au) Website is [www.interpath.com.au](http://www.interpath.com.au).

Postal Address: 1/46 Sheahan Rd, PO Box 340, West Heidelberg, Victoria 3081.

Price is \$40 plus \$4 GST for a 40m roll and cost of road freight to SA is \$30 plus \$3 GST (minimum charge) all prepaid, and the only way they would do business until I made other arrangements with their SA Rep. I can't speak for other states. (KW)

PARAFILM comes from Brisbane from Labtek, PO Box 5316, Brendale, Qld 4500. Phone No 07 3881 1388.

email is [sales@labtek.com.au](mailto:sales@labtek.com.au) Website [www.labtek.com.au](http://www.labtek.com.au)

The website lists the price at \$29.95 a roll; length not listed. Product Code 701605. GST and delivery details are not known. (The roll I have is 2 inches wide x 250ft long. Colin)

### THE BIG FREEZE AND LESSONS LEARNT

The cold snap experienced over much of southern Australia in June caused severe damage to many members' collections. The cold nights came early when plants were in good growth and had not hardened up for winter. Temperatures of down to minus 6°C were recorded by members (and others) with whom I have been in contact, ranging from the River Murray (Russell Wait and Tom Loffler), the Mallee (Ray Isaacson), Adelaide Hills (Hans Griesser), Eastern Ranges (Beverley Rice at Dutton) and the Arid Lands Botanic Garden at Port Augusta. The reports have been of universal severe damage, loss of many plants and only now (November) some limited shooting from main stems.

I was lucky in that we are not in a frost prone area on our side of Owen, a nasty east breeze keeps the frost at bay, compared to where Peter and Ronda Hall lived only 12km away on the west side of Owen, but it was a spell not without difficulty. When I first spotted the white lawn from my bedroom window I headed straight to the main planting with a watering can and washed the frost off wherever seen. With more frost forecast I carted a heap of various size drums and covers to the patch and for the next few nights the suspected vulnerable species were covered and early morning forays were made with the watering can. It was cold enough to freeze water left in the can overnight but the only plant I lost was the un-named sp. nov. from the Kennedy Range which I had not known to be susceptible.

To some specific plants! *Eremophila magnifica* is a renowned frost tender species and wherever it touched the 200 litre oil drum cut in half covering it, it was severely burnt. All buds went the first night but the main bush was untouched and is now shooting from most side branches. As anyone who has tried to grow it will testify it is a species that does not readily shoot from damaged growth so to get it through was a victory and now with an inch of rain I hope for a good burst of late flowers. I expect this to be an ongoing battle. A young grafted plant within a plastic sleeve was undamaged and this level of protection was sufficient for all others similarly enclosed. *Eremophila flaccida* was burnt across the crown but has recovered well and with the flowers underneath the canopy they were undamaged. *Eremophila cuneifolia* had every soft tip and bud burnt black, but leaves 1cm away were untouched. It has been killed outright in many gardens. New shoots and buds are giving a late flowering that should continue for some time. *Eremophila phyllopoda* subsp. *obliqua* was burnt close to the ground on the shaded side on the first night but suffered no further damage once protected. What I call the Rawlinson Range form of *E. acrida*, but well may be something new, suffered light tip damage only.

Among species heavily frosted on the first night, but washed off before the sun reached them, and protected and/or washed off on subsequent cold nights, that I expected to show damage but seem to have come through unscathed include *E. elderi*, *E. acrida*, *E. platythamnos*, *E. gibsonii*, *E. fasciata*, *E. warnesii*, *E. rotundifolia*, *E.*

*biserrata*, *E. serpens*, and *E. glabra* prostrate forms, some coastal. Some of the prostrate species were white carpets. *Eremophila serpens*, in particular, showed its toughness because three weeks later it spent 24 hours under water following a big rain, the last of the year I might add, until this week's inch. There were several young plants in sleeves which I would expect to be vulnerable, but that knowledge will have to be gained, perhaps painfully, at some future date.

What can be deduced from this and the long discussions I have had with several members? Firstly, I didn't suffer the level of frost to which many were subject. It didn't get as cold, the cold was not as prolonged in either hours or days, the plants were small enough to cover and I was in a position and determined to protect the plants where possible. But this was a fair test in a planting no more than two years old of 600 plants of over 200 species, sub-species and hybrids, (that doesn't include multiple forms of a species), plus two hundred odds and sods including many hakeas which also survived well. In this area I am frantically trying to concentrate my own, and others', years of collecting so that when I move to Owen I have an area to come and "potter". There are a further twenty species elsewhere on the farm that need duplicating and good friends are assisting with quite a few others.

Many of the young ones were in plastic sleeves; the ground was still holding good moisture and had been sprayed so that few weeds were present. Perhaps this last may have provided as much protection as anything else, certainly in the past I have attracted frost with straw mulch and now consider a couple of shovels of crushed rock to be as good a mulch as any.

One of the concerns this winter raises is that we seem to be as far away as ever from establishing a World Reference Garden Collection. I had hoped that Port Augusta would be the place but they continue to have major problems with frost every year. Moves are under way to select an area of higher ground that may help resolve the situation, only time will tell on that one. Private collections will come and go according to the dedication, enthusiasm, health and age of the individuals involved and can't be relied upon. Perhaps the task of collecting plants from 60% of the Australian mainland and growing them in one place is insurmountable, but it remains the objective of some of us. As Bob Chinnock said when he was up here recently "It's amazing to see so many in one place". Yet since then I have lost several plants from root and crown rots despite one of the driest periods on record. *Eremophila clarkei* in particular has disappointed with nearly every plant on its own roots dying, but every grafted plant surviving. Raised beds would help but I recall a year when we worked the tractors for two half days in six weeks. I hate to think what that would do to my "Desert Lovers".

Live on in hope and continue to spread the word. If climate change becomes a fact of life and with ever increasing water restrictions, OUR DAY WILL COME.

Ken Warnes

#### SHORT MEANDERINGS 2006

In August I kept a promise to an aging relative to take her to the station country North-East of Alice Springs to visit the grave of an old school-friend. Of course this gave a chance to once again keep an eye open as we travelled the Stuart Highway and I totaled twenty two species and resolved a problem at Rainbow Valley as well. Until we crossed into the Northern Territory the country was very dry and even north of the border it was patchy, but we collected some good *E. rotundifolia* south of Coober Pedy and there were many colourful *E. neglecta* and *E. duttonii* north from Cadney Park. At Eridunda there were both *E. willsii* and *E. platythamnos*.

After spending some time taking photographs at Rainbow Valley, (it's superb anytime from mid-day on) I decided to try and solve the problem of the disappearing *E. prostrata*. Sure enough, about 200m from the camp ground I spotted a rail that looked as if it closed off a road, and on closer examination could make out where the entrance road used to cut across a sandy flat, exactly as described to me many years ago. Following this faint track I came, within 100m, to a few plants of *E. prostrata* and shortly afterwards, large numbers of them. Also what appeared to be a hybrid with *E. willsii* which was on the nearby, low sand ridge. Could this have possibly been Ray Isaacson's original, magnificent, "Rainbow Beauty"? Unlikely after all these years, but who knows.

This population appeared to continue on towards the Stuart Creek boundary where we collected it two years earlier. Once aware of the existence of the track it wasn't hard to spot the other end of it near the Park boundary gate. So without doubt the road into Rainbow Valley has been changed, presumably to protect the stand of *E. prostrata*, which by the way is a most beautiful purple flowered ground cover. If only it was a bit more amenable to cultivation. Does the discovery of the old road throw into doubt my earlier suggestion that the plants die back to dormant stumps in dry times? Probably, but at least we now know why Rainbow Valley was able to keep its secret for so long.

There were some good forms of *E. gilesii* and green and grey leaf forms of *E. latrobei* along the Plenty Highway, especially where chance storms had passed and I was lucky to find a lovely pale sky-blue form of *E. acrida*.

Small leaved forms of *E. macdonnellii* and a dwarf form of *E. willsii* were seen on the way to Palm Valley. A number of the more unusual were collected and are being propagated.

On the return from Alice Springs I was fortunate to join a bush camp of the Kimba Group of APS in the furthest west outlying group of hills of the Gawler Ranges. We were there by kind permission so I can't divulge the exact location but it was near enough to the Dog Fence for me to go for a walk along the adjoining track in white sand dune country where I found several plants of the most beautiful *E. platythamos* subsp. *villosa* I have ever seen. Upright to 1.5m and branching from a central stem with large purple flowers and showy calyx they were outstanding. It was a surprise to meet *E. weldii* face to face, yes they were all but 2m tall and *E. crassifolia* was there also. On the steep hills with their sculptured tors of ancient granite were lots of *E. oppositifolia* and on the southern shores of Lake Gairdner, visited on the way out, were good forms of *E. alternifolia* with low, dense habit, probably developed as an adaptation to the saline environment but now at least partly genetically stabilized. We also called in on the S.A. populations of *E. interstans* at Uno and found them to be in the heaviest flowering I had seen. It's difficult to propagate but 2 plants at home are growing well.

The other high point of the year was receiving 2 parcels from Western Australia from Laverton and Newman, which contained a lot of interesting plants, including some suspected hybrids. I know not everyone is keen on them but one in particular was "something else". It was found among a patch of *E. maculata* subsp. *brevifolia* but has grey leaves and big purplish flowers. In the same parcel was *E. gilesii* subsp. *variabilis*. "Surely not" was my reaction but on speaking to the sender on her return it seems not impossible. Two grafted plants are being carefully tended. A grafted *E. homoplastica* is being "willed" to survive and there's many more.

Ken Warnes

### IN SEARCH OF EREMOPHILAS IN THE WEST

We (that is Keith & Norma Boschen and Graham & Maree Goods) had come from the Northern Territory on the Great Central Road from Docker River, through Warburton, Tjukayirla Roadhouse then turning north on the David Carnegie Road 15km south of Tjukayirla. This was the beginning of our great big adventure into the unknown. We had left home in early June and by now we had left behind the cold winter days and were experiencing beautiful sunny weather. Needless to say though we did not miss out on the early morning frosts, with many registering minus six degrees – a test of one's ability to get the bones and muscles working for the early morning camping chores. Due to recent rains much of the area we travelled through in the Gibson Desert was in good heart.

One of the first eremophilas we found, after we crossed the border into WA on the Great Central road, was the red flowering *E. duttonii*. A few kilometres on we came upon a yellow flowering form, a neat contrast to the red. Near Giles Weather Station we saw *E. hughesii* trying desperately to flower. It is a difficult one to photograph at any time, especially when it is windy. Other eremophilas on the Great Central Road were various forms of *E. latrobei*, *E. longifolia*, *E. platythamos*, *E. forrestii*, *E. tietkensis*, *E. exilifolia*, *E. clarkei*, *E. punctata* and *E. gilesii*.

Fifteen kilometres further on from Tjukayirla Roadhouse we turned north onto the David Carnegie Road. We had previously been informed that very few eremophilas grew along this track so were very pleasantly surprised when we found several species within the first twelve kilometres. It was great to see some old favourites that we are growing at home. In addition to what we had already seen were *E. maculata* subsp. *brevifolia*, *E. pantonii*, *E. glabra*, and *E. serrulata*. Further on we found *E. battii*. No doubt there were probably more species but we had a destination to reach in the Great Sandy Desert and we were already running late. Too much sightseeing on the way like calling into Giles Weather Station and meeting old friends who we didn't even know were working there, cost us a day catching up and swapping news from the home front.

From the David Carnegie we diverted onto a short section of the Gunbarrel, thank goodness, as it was very corrugated, and then again north onto the Gary Highway, a two-wheel track with foliage such as *Acacia* and *Grevillea wickhamii* that was in full flower and dripping in nectar brushing the sides of our vehicles. The Gary Highway is one of the many roads surveyed by Len Beadell.

*Eremophila pallida* and *E. revoluta* are two of our smallest eremophilas and they were both growing along the Gary Highway. I have been growing *E. revoluta* for three years now and it has not suffered any effects from the frosts or drought. I will admit though one of the plants is getting a watering about once a month because it has to compete with a large *Eucalyptus spathulata*. Silly me for planting it near such a big hungry tree. Both *E. pallida* and *E. revoluta* have blue flowers but on the Gary Highway neither species was putting on much of a show. In fact *E. pallida* had very little leaf mostly twigs. Perhaps it was suffering from a localised dry spell or that may be its natural appearance.

*Eremophila platythamnus* subsp. *exotrachys*, with its grey/green foliage and blue flowers was growing on a sand ridge for approximately three to four kilometres running parallel to the track. It appeared that the area had been burnt about two/three years previously and had regenerated quite thickly after the fire.

The Desert is never without its surprises. An unexpected and rare sight was an almost one kilometre long stretch of water in Lake Cohen due to good rains in August 2005 and further rains earlier this year. Two beautiful Royal Spoonbills kept us entertained and clicking cameras for about 30-40 minutes. Their bills were sweeping from side to side in the water as they fed on small water creatures in the sediment. What a wonderful sight – to see a wet lake in such a dry landscape.

Our destination was 20km east of the Kidson track, 60km north of Lake Auld, in the southern Great Sandy Desert. We spent nearly three weeks there with Desert Discovery Inc. which carried out many surveys including flora, fauna, reptile, ants, scorpions, scats from introduced animals such as foxes and feral cats, birds, bird banding, and marsupial mole burrows. We participated in the flora and bird surveys. Unfortunately eremophilas were at a premium. However we did find plenty of *E. tietkensis*. In fact about sixty acres in one colony interspersed with *E. latrobei* subsp. *latrobei* and a very fine form of *E. latrobei* subsp. *glabra*. This was some kilometres north of our campsite near Picture Hill, which is a low rocky outcrop. All the eremophilas found at Picture Hill were also recorded at our campsite with the addition of *E. forrestii*. Several participants travelled further north and northeast in the Great Sandy Desert to Sahara Well and Bremner Peak and did not see any eremophilas. Obviously it was getting out of their range.

After our rendezvous in the Great Sandy Desert we travelled though the eastern Pilbara on the Telfer Mine/Marble Bar Road, turning south onto the Woodie Woodie Road to Carawine Gorge. Unfortunately the gorge had been considerably damaged in a cyclone four years previously and was still recovering. I would imagine it could take hundreds of years to recover if ever it does as many of the very large eucalypts had been ripped out of the ground.

We travelled on the Skull Creek Road to Newman. One of the prettiest drives we have ever been on but needless to say very few, if any eremophilas. The countryside had obviously received some of the rains from the cyclones earlier in the year. *Ptilotus exaltatus* was so prolific along with several species of sennas (I think they must be as promiscuous as eremophilas), acacias and several members of the pea family such as *Indigofera* and *Tephrosia* interspersed with several ephemerals. The country has some rolling hills as well as rugged outcrops with lovely wide creek beds so all in all a very attractive drive.

As we were getting closer to Newman the eremophilas started to appear again and one that is always very striking with its many colours of creams, pinks and purples is *E. cuneifolia*. We were in much the same region this time last year and I must say that they were not as striking as they had been the year before – obviously rains had come at a different time. If you could only grow one eremophila I would have to choose this one. It is just so spectacular.

After a clean up and a stock up of essentials in Newman we headed west through Karajini – barely even stopped except for one plant of *E. canaliculata* and the occasional plant of *E. phyllopoda* subsp. *obliqua*. Our destination was the Ashburton Downs/Meekatharra Road and what a treat was in store for us. I will not even attempt to write about all the plants we saw but just a few highlights.

We did see an old *E. phyllopoda* subsp. *obliqua* with its very curly, leggy trunk standing about a metre high and with the thickest bunch of flowers at the top I have ever seen. It had obviously seen hard times but had responded to the cyclonic rains earlier in the year.

Of course you do not travel in the Ashburton Downs region without seeing the Ashburton Pea, *Swainsona maccullochiana*. It also was having a good year.

It was surprising to see the various forms of *E. platycalyx*, from quite broad to very long narrow leaves. The leaves varied far more than the flower colours. Most were having a good year and putting on a show. One plant that grows like a weed in this region is *E. fraseri*, and it also can put on a good show when it wants to. A similar plant in habit is *E. flaccida*, another one of my favourites. I have managed to keep one going in my garden this year despite all the frosts. It was badly hit but at the moment you would never know. It was only a small plant, 18 months old and is now larger than it was prior to the frosts. So if your *E. flaccida* looks dead, don't despair because it is just as likely to shoot again once the frosts are over, as mine did.

Another exciting find was a colony of *E. humilis* in amongst *E. canaliculata* on a low rocky rise. Both were in flower and out came the cameras again to prove we had seen these darling little plants. It was at this stage we realised that we had lost the handle that winds up our camper and yes, I was the culprit – I had not taken it out of its socket and put in the back of the Ute so it was at this stage we had to turn around and follow our footsteps to see if we could find it. We had camped 13 kilometres further back and yes you guessed it we travelled 12.9

kilometres before we found it. Dash it – I was having so much fun in amongst a couple of new species I had never seen before. By the time we arrived back to catch up with the Boschens it was time to move on so I cannot tell you what other *eremophila* plants, if any, were growing in amongst the *E. humilis* and *E. canaliculata*.

For some reason, this trip, I noticed that we were coming across some of the smaller species of *Eremophila* and if we could grow them successfully they would make ideal garden plants. *Eremophila caespitosa* is a delightful plant about 30cm high and not much wider with its whitish grey woolly leaves and blue flowers. It too had experienced an excellent season, although earlier than when we found it. Needless to say though there were still some flowers to photograph. Another species, very rare was *E. lanata*, not altogether that different in dimensions to *E. caespitosa* but its foliage was greener and not as hairy. Another of the small plants we saw was *E. obliquisejala*. It is similar to *E. georgei* in looks that is to the eye of the amateur (Bob is probably cringing and saying there are some very obvious differences). The plants we saw were less than 40cm high and about as wide with large blue flowers, another gem of a plant but then aren't all *eremophilas* gems? If you want to see some of these, Western Australia is the place to go. I certainly have not covered all the species we saw, as there were probably another 20 to 30 that I have not mentioned, but then perhaps you need to visit the West to see them for yourselves.

Maree Goods

### FROM YOUR LETTERS

#### Hans Griesser – Gumeracha, SA

(On 21<sup>st</sup> September Hans sent the following notes to me.)

After an extremely cold winter, I can perhaps add some information on frost tolerance. My garden has been hit hard; about half of the approximately one hundred and eighty *Eremophila* plants seem dead (as are most *eremaea* and *calothamnus*, many *banksias* and assorted others.) Many of the plants are definitely dead, with the bark on the trunk and the branches split and even shredded, and the stems turned dry and brittle. Some other *eremophilas* lost their leaves (e.g. *E. viscida* and *E. gibbosa*) and the younger branchlets are black, but the trunk and the main branches are still green and fleshy, so I hope that some of them will shoot again. I plan to write up a list of the damage in about a month's time when those which can re-shoot will probably have done so.

Among the victims are many plants that had survived three or four earlier winters with no, or very little damage. For example, well-established and healthy plants of *E. mirabilis*, *E. splendens* (four plants), *E. platycalyx*, *E. oppositifolia* (three plants) and *E. microtheca*, all planted in June 2002, are totally dead when previous winters had not harmed them, even the *E. microtheca* which the booklet says is a bit frost tender. By extrapolation, from the thermometer placed on the house wall with observations of frost, I think that a couple of nights would have gone down to -8°C or so.

But other plants, such as *E. lucida* and *E. divaricata*, showed no damage at all, being in the same open situation. Thus I thought it might be interesting for Newsletter readers in frost-prone areas to read what species can and cannot tolerate heavy frost.

Ken Warnes had warned me that he thought that Gumeracha was marginal territory for *eremophilas*, and for four years I thought he was just being cautious, but now I know what he means. The frosts here this winter were just beyond anything I had imagined, much worse than anything I had experienced in Victoria. But we live and plant again.... Can't shake the *eremophila* growing bug!!

#### Graham Lay – Horsham, Victoria

I last reported on this WA plant briefly in the April 2000 Newsletter. Since then, it has continued to prosper and still looks good after seven years.

In my garden *E. splendens* is an open shrub 1½ to 2 metres high and wide. It has attractive orange flowers and hairy, ovate leaves. Rightly or wrongly, I have not pruned it at all over this time, but it has plants around it which lend support. One of these companion plants is *Leptospermum* 'Pink Cascade' and in September there is a delightful contrast in flower colour, shape and foliage.

I suspect that *E. splendens* is a fairly hardy plant since its position in my garden is rather exposed, receiving summer heat and winds that blow from the north. By now its roots would be well into naturally occurring clay soil on our house block here in Horsham. It is given no special care except some watering after very hot days in summer. It remains one of my favourite Australian plants.

**Frank Fitzpatrick – formerly Walpeup, Victoria**

(Frank sent a letter to me recently from his new home in Crows Nest, Queensland, advising of his wish to withdraw from the Study Group, due to his move.)

You had best leave me off your mailing list for the Eremophila Study Group.

I have had the “bug” for eremophilas for a few years now; in particular of *E. maculata*, its seedlings and the seedlings of *E. bignoniiflora*. For the purpose of identification I have named them after members of my family, grand-children etc.

Jocelyn Lindner has been and collected cuttings from most of them and may be able to keep the “Walpy” range of *E. maculata* going.

Ray Schilling and Alec Hawtin have quite a few, but they didn’t keep the cuts separate and so my naming of them means little to them.

The Walpeup Dryland Garden has quite a selection of eremophilas now. Volunteer labour is scarce, but I feel sure that Mildura Parks & Gardens through Mark Jenkins will keep it “alive.”

Thankyou for the workshops held at Warracknabeal and at Russell Wait’s place. I hope that Crows Nest has a vibrant Garden Club.

**Gordon Brooks – Castle Hill, NSW**

Like other Sydney-based members I have enjoyed the meetings we have had and the outcomes of these. Unfortunately I am getting a little too old to be as active as I have been and you will know that I have asked to be relieved of my duties as chair. I will support Charles (Farrugia) as far as I can.

We have tried to interest others in eremophilas but without as lot of success to date. Nevertheless, we will keep trying because there is little doubt that many species and hybrids will grow in our Sydney gardens without much, if any, extra water. And it does not appear that we will have any relaxation of the present water restrictions any time soon.

We are looking forward to the publication of the ‘Eremophila Book’ and delighted that the Rosenbergs have been selected as publishers. They live nearby and are well-known to most of us. As Chair of the APS NSW Publishing Committee for some years I had a close association with them in respect of the publishing of several books, including the Grevillea Books. Ian Cox and I were able to offer Cilla some cut eremophilas to show a group of bookshop representatives what they are.

**Brother Howard – Tabulam, NSW**

Greetings from the bush! I have just been wandering around the Darling Downs and Warrego areas. I had the joy of judging cooking at the Australian Camp Oven Festival at Millmerran and then going to Charleville to do a parish mission at the Anglican Church.

It was a bit late and very dry for eremophilas, but nevertheless we saw plenty, quite a few of which I am yet to identify. Of particular interest were yellow-flowered forms of *E. maculata*. After losing the little population outside Goondiwindi to clearing for cotton-growing, it was pleasing to find others, though these are rather paler than the ones that used to grow in the Goondiwindi-Boomi Road. *Eremophila maculata* is widespread in its occurrence. The flowers on other specimens along the road were apricot or pink in colour. Elsewhere, especially between Cunnamulla and Auguthella they are mainly darker shades of pink.

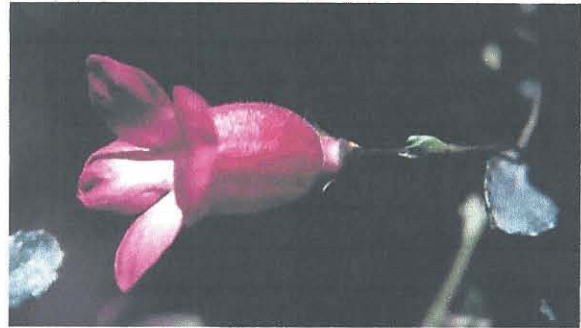
Others noticed included *E. bignoniiflora* at Cunnamulla, *E. gilesii* around Charleville, *E. duttonii* near Charleville, *E. mitchellii* all over the place, *E. polyclada* east of Cunnamulla and between Charleville and Auguthella and *E. bowmanii* near Charleville. One day I will return in late August or in September when they are flowering – hopefully in a better season!

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*Eremophila caespitosa*



*Eremophila enata*



*Eremophila fasciata*



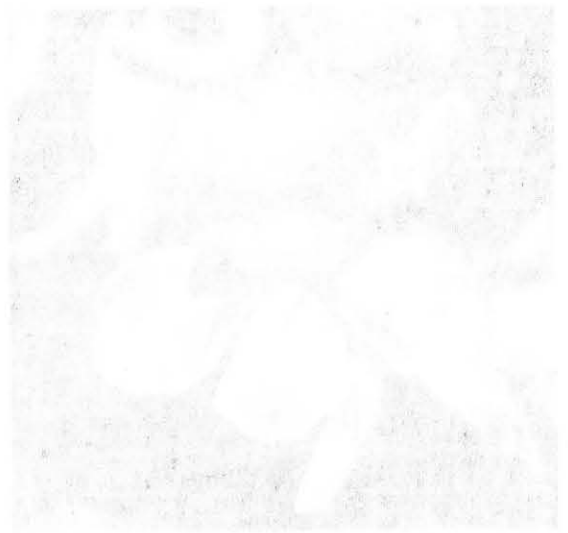
*Eremophila glandulifera*



*Eremophila conglomerata*



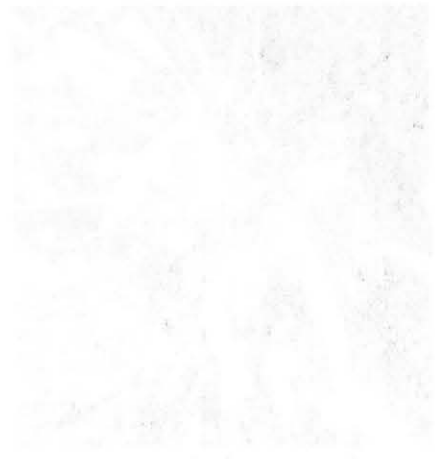
White fluffy chick



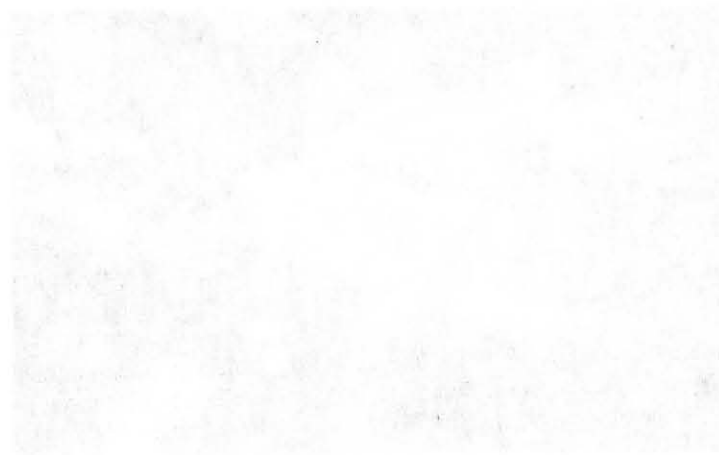
Group of white fluffy chicks



White fluffy chick



White fluffy chick



White fluffy chick