

**Association of Societies for Growing Australian Plants
EREMOPHILA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER No. 93**

April 2008

I have now sold all of the copies of the books by Bob Chinnock. If anyone still wants a copy I suggest that you contact the publishers directly. Books are also available from a number of the larger bookstores, especially those which stock reference or academic publications.

Due to conditions which apply to the ASGAP insurance policy, it is essential that all members of study groups are registered as members so that if any activities are conducted the members present are covered by the policy in place. To this end, study group activities arranged at which members are involved in meeting together for whatever purpose; you are required to let me know of the event so that I can advise the relevant ASGAP personnel that the event is a official function of the Eremophila Study Group. People attending, who are not financial members of the Study Group will not be covered by the ASGAP insurance policy. If you are currently a 'one person' member and your partner is attending such meetings it would be in your own interests to ensure that the partner is also listed as a member of the study Group – many dual memberships are currently listed by me. Please remember that both must be members of an ASGAP affiliated group to be a member of an ASGAP Study group. This might seem like a lot of trouble, but to be covered by the insurance, we have been advised by the insurers that it is essential that we follow the conditions applying in order for cover to be granted. .

This will therefore apply to each of the sub-groups which meet at regular or irregular times: e.g. The Sydney Group and the Melbourne Group. It will also apply each time we arrange a study group garden visit, workshop etc. etc.

The weather across the country in December was to say the least extreme. From extensive bushfires, ignited by lightning from violent 'dry' thunderstorms, on Kangaroo Island which burnt through almost 20% of the island's vegetation, to the severe flooding in parts of what was drought-ravaged New South Wales, to tornado-style winds in Pinaroo in the Murray Mallee of South Australia. Meanwhile the pastoral areas seem to have received very good fall in many parts of the country. Despite this there are still areas which have received little or no rain. Other areas have been affected by these extremes. I trust that the outcomes for you all have been favourable and that your eremophilas have survived whatever Mother Nature' has thrown in your direction.

Added to these conditions, we in Adelaide had a record number of days with temperatures of 35°C or above. At the same time there were floods in NSW and Queensland. Water restrictions are the worst that they have ever been in a number of cities and when I saw the condition of the lower lakes of the River Murray a few weeks ago I was appalled at the level to which the water had been allowed to drop, causing people whose livelihoods depended on there being water available, at least to drink. Our recent trip to the Brisbane area enabled us to see at first hand the conditions around that city. While some localities looked lush and green, when we travelled out to Toowoomba and south to Warwick it was noticeable just how dry that part of the region was. The weather to say the least has been very fickle.

I have deliberately left this issue for as long as possible, firstly to allow for any additional articles to be received and secondly for me to catch up on the backlog of other tasks I had to do as a result of us going to Miami for the World Orchid Conference in January and the Australian Begonia Convention in Brisbane at the end of March.

If you have written to me since early January, I apologise for the delay in replying, if a reply was required. I have included all receipts in this newsletter for money received since the December 2007 newsletter and I believe that I have now sent out those items requested in the letters received.

I plan to send the next newsletter out in August. It would be appreciated if any articles which you can provide are sent to me by about the middle of July. If they arrive earlier I can make a start on the August newsletter. Articles can be sent as Word Document attachments via email or if you wish by mail as letters or typed articles.

Subscriptions for 2008 will fall due at the end of June.

I have decided that the **rate of \$5 will continue**, at least for the coming year. Members, whose subscription falls due this year, can send renewals to me from now on. I have indicated on this newsletter in the usual way if your subscription falls due this year.

If you wish to pay more than one year's subscription that is OK.

APS SOUTH AUSTRALIA – PLANT SALE

Those who have attended the South Australian APS Plant Sale will know what a range of species the member-growers in this state produce for sale twice a year.

The Autumn Sale will be held in the Adelaide Show Grounds on the weekend of 3rd & 4th May. Opening time on BOTH days is 10am: closing time on Saturday is 5pm, and on Sunday, 4pm. So popular are these sales that queues start to form at least 30minutes prior to opening time, especially on Saturday – the time when the selection of plants is at its maximum.

Please note that the actual venue within the Show Grounds complex has been changed from the Wayville Pavilion. You will have no trouble finding the new location – the event will be well signposted. Parking is available.

Although weather and drought conditions have been less than favourable for raising plants for sale, you can be assured that there will still be an excellent range of plants with low water requirements; included amongst which will be many eremophilas – already known to us as excellent plants for low water situations.

AUSTRALIA'S EREMOPHILAS

The 7th F J Rogers Seminar - Eremophilas will be held in Horsham on Saturday & Sunday 4th & 5th October 2008. The venue is the Horsham College Assembly Hall. The keynote speaker will be Dr Bob Chinnock.

To be launched at this seminar is the book *Australia's Eremophilas*, co-authored by three members of our Eremophila Study Group: Norma Boschen, Maree Goods and Russell Wait, who will also present either talks and/or workshops.

This event should prove to be an excellent opportunity for members of the study group to get together with other like-minded native plant enthusiasts.

I have included a publicity brochure which Maree Goods has provided. Maree contacted me to ask if I would be able to include a copy of it in this issue of the Newsletter. I was only too happy to assist in the promotion of this prestigious seminar.

Details of the seminar programme, costs etc. are included in the brochure.

Study Group Members who are able to attend the seminar are encouraged to register their intention. The list of speakers and the schedule of events suggests that this will be a very worthwhile weekend. Please support it if you can!

Being in a country town, you might find that accommodation is somewhat limited. If you intend to go to the Seminar it would be a good idea to register early and make sure that you have your accommodation booked well in advance.

FROM YOUR LETTERS

Charles Farrugia – Seven Hills, NSW

Here in Sydney we have had plenty of rain. Sydney's Warragamba Dam has gone from 38% to over 60% capacity.

I have lost five eremophilas but I am not convinced that this is due to the wet conditions. These eremophilas were showing signs of stress well before the rain came to Sydney. I have lost two *E. macdonnellii* (prostrate with green leaves), *E. glabra* (prostrate – lime flowers), *E. macdonnellii* (Simpson Desert form) and a potted *E. subfloccosa*.

The rest are doing very well, with the following sending out new growth from old stems.

E. subfloccosa, *E. tomentosa* and *E. denticulata* subsp. *trisulcata*.

The two species which surprised me most were *E. fasciata* and *E. hygrophana* (from Russell Wait). I thought that the wet conditions we have had wouldn't suit these two species, but instead they are thriving with very little dieback.

John Rooke – Casterton, Vic

...Incredible year here – the dams are full for the first time for a long while – best flood since 1993/4. The grass is so long that the cattle can't be seen. Rainfall exceeded the yearly average by November, after a really dry first six months. The eremophilas have flowered strongly and have loved the season.

Ian Mitchell – Ringwood, Vic

I see that some people have trouble with frosts - this is not to be compared with bushfires. Most of the plants we grew at Stawell (Vic) for many years were lost in the bushfire on New Year's Day in 2006. A few months later I met Alan Anderson at a plant sale and he enquired about my eremophilas, so I told him and within a couple of weeks he arrived with many plants in pots. Some of these have grown, but most were too small to stand up to wild-life grazing and the drought. I also had plants from Peter Lang in Mildura and from the Wimmera Growers at Dimboola, but they have also suffered from drought.

In the last Newsletter Ron Gruinke was enquiring about *Myoporum biagiana*. This looks like a spell-checker's guess of *Myoporum betchianum* which grows in south-west Queensland (Chinnock P128) and would be a logical choice for local stock from grafting.

Sandra Wood – Kadina, South Australia

The new Chinnock book is wonderful. The Eremophila muelleriana looked amazing, so when I saw one at the autumn plant sale at Wayville (APS - SA's Plant Sale), I could not resist buying. I usually avoid grafted eremophilas because of past experience, so I took cuttings before planting.

The purchase is now flourishing behind the bird bath in view from my favourite chair. Two of the three cuttings rooted and one continued on. It now has many shoots and its first flower. I am wondering if this species is hard to propagate or if it was grafted to adapt to Adelaide conditions. Conditions here are hotter and drier than Adelaide (2 hours to our south). It is perfect for the eremophilas.

APS SOUTH AUSTRALIAN REGION - GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

2008 is the celebratory year for the Australian Plant Society, SA Region's Golden Anniversary.

A major function of this year's activities was the presentation of one hundred and fifty eremophila plants to be planted in the Mallee Section of the Adelaide Botanic Garden near to the East Lodge, at the North Terrace boundary. There exists already in this area a well established garden of eremophilas. Garden staff have mapped out areas into which the new plantings will be made.

On Sunday 13th April the groups held a lunch-time gathering in Botanic Park where they enjoyed a shared lunch. There was a very good attendance, and it was most pleasing to see many of our country groups represented, as well as a significant attendance of older members who are no longer able to attend regular monthly meetings.

After lunch, members walked across to the garden beds where John Sandham (Collections Development Officer of the ABG) thanked the APS for its donation of the eremophilas. Simon Habel (Head of Gardens) also thanked the APS for its generosity and John Barrie, newly elected President of APSSA, spoke on behalf of the society. John Barrie is a current member of the Eremophila Study Group. Margaret Lee, a Foundation Member of both APS SA and the Eremophila Study Group (originally Project Eremophila) presented Simon with a bouquet of everlasting native daisies.

Ken Warnes was invited to say a few words and in his comments he referred to the early collections made in SA, especially by Ron Hill, a staff member of the ABG, for whom *Eremophila hillii* was named. Ken also referred to the search for eremophilas in SA and also in WA by himself and by other members of the Eremophila Study Group.

This collection of eremophilas will add to the already well established selection in the Garden. Given the rate at which they seem to grow in this climate it should not be too long before we see the garden beds filled with plants in full bloom. Next time you visit Adelaide have a look!

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