

Dear Members,

Sincere commiserations to anyone who was affected by storms, floods, bushfires, locust plague or drought over the past half-year.

Apologies that this newsletter is far later than I had hoped. I have been temporarily (from Oct 90 to July 91) back in the workforce to fortify the family income.

Thanks to everyone who paid subs and donations and brought the financial balance of our Study Group to a comfortable level. A current membership list is over the page. In addition, newsletters are sent by request to Mr Ken Hill at the National Herbarium of NSW, and the Librarian at the Australian National Botanic Gardens, Canberra.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT (MAY 1991)

RECEIPTS	EXPENDITURE
Subscriptions 234.00	Brought forward 65.58
Donations 53.65	Postage 36.60
	Copying 64.60
287.65	
Balance in hand 120.87	166.78

New Members

It is a pleasure to welcome to the Study Group Gwen Calnan of Bridport, England, Gail O'Connor of Gladstone Park, Vic, and Warner B. Wait, "Nerrigundah", RSD 764 Deloraine TAS 7304.

New Eucalypts

Just when you thought the list of eucalypt species couldn't possibly get much larger, there are a surprising number of new species recently published.

Two recent papers deserve prominence because they were authored by members of our own Study Group: Tony Bean and Kevin Rule.

Eucalyptus infera is described by Tony Bean (*Austrobaileya* 3(2): 291-295, 1990) as a mallee to 8 metres with smooth shiny coppery to olive-green bark, shedding in ribbons, with orbicular juvenile leaves (70 x 70 mm) and broad glossy green adult leaves (to 79 x 38 mm). The species is named from the Latin "inferus" (beneath) because, interestingly, it grows as an understorey to other eucalypts. It is currently known only from one area 40-50 hectares near the Herries Range SW of Warwick, Qld.

While a distinctive species, it shares some characteristics with the Red Gums (horn-shaped buds, fruits with convex disc and strongly exerted valves, and seed features) and other characteristics with the Swamp Gums (leaf, seedling stem and bark characters) and "would perhaps best be placed in a separate series between Series *Exsertae* and *Foveolatae*".

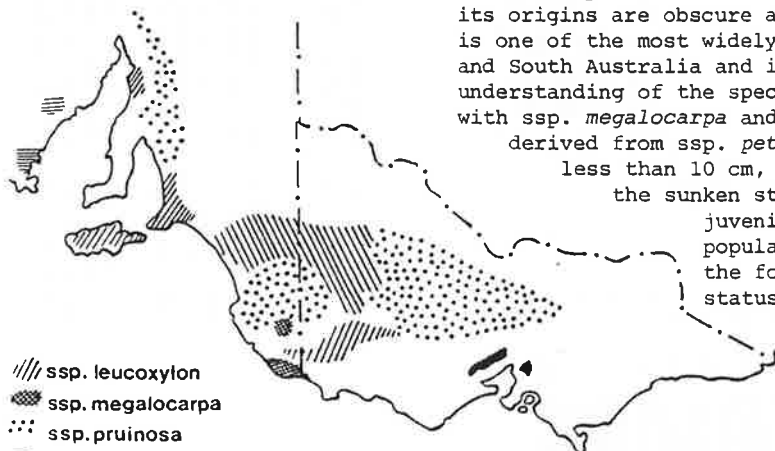
Tony has sent seed of *E. infera* for Study Group members to try growing and report on, and he comments: "I did not go into the horticultural aspects in the paper, but I believe *infera* has great potential as a garden subject. Its best features are its glossy green leaves, smooth colourful bark, and abundant white flowers in spring, as well as its ability to grow on poorly drained sites. My plants at Nambour are doing quite well, but they do suffer from leaf spotting during the wet summer months. I expect it would do much better in NSW".

Kevin Rule has identified two new subspecies, each morphologically and geographically distinct, within *Eucalyptus leucoxylon*: subsp. *stephaniae* (named in memory of daughter Stephanie who used to accompany him on eucalypt field trips) has sporadic desert populations from Meningie in SA to Dimboola in Victoria; and subsp. *connata* (the name referring to the connate juvenile leaves) is found in "markedly depleted populations" on sandstone hills in the vicinity of Melbourne and Geelong.

I would like to refer you to the paper (*Muelleria* 7(3): 389-403, March 1991) for thorough tables comparing these with the other subspecies *leucoxylon*, *pruinosa*, *petiolaris* & *megalocarpa*. Meanwhile I have attempted a rough summary of the distinguishing features:

	buds globular fruits hemispherical	buds ovoid
waxy juvenile leaves -	<i>pruinosa</i>	<i>leucoxylon</i> - buds elongated; fruits cylindrical
small-leaved; fruits have persiting pellicle -	<i>stephaniae</i>	<i>megalocarpa</i> - broad-leaved; fruits large and globular-truncate
connate juvenile leaves -	<i>connata</i>	<i>petiolaris</i> - petiolate juvenile leaves; fruits campanulate, ribbed

Kevin Rule emphasises that work on the infraspecific taxonomy of *Eucalyptus leucoxylon* is ongoing. "Of considerable interest is the horticulturally exploited form known as var. 'rosea' or less often var. 'macrocarpa rosea' or "dwarf". Whilst it breeds true, except for flower colour, and is morphologically distinct, its origins are obscure and it can have no taxonomic status. It is one of the most widely planted ornamental eucalypts in Victoria and South Australia and its features dominate many enthusiasts' understanding of the species. Some observers have confused it with ssp. *megalocarpa* and others have suggested that it has been derived from ssp. *petiolaris*. However, its slender leaves of less than 10 cm, relatively large cylindrical fruits with the sunken style base and alternate, subpetiolate juvenile leaves are distinctive. If a parent population does exist and could be located, the form would be entitled to a subspecific status."



- /// ssp. leucoxylon
- ssp. megalocarpa
- ssp. pruinosa
- ≡≡≡ ssp. petiolaris
- ||| ssp. stephaniae
- ssp. connata

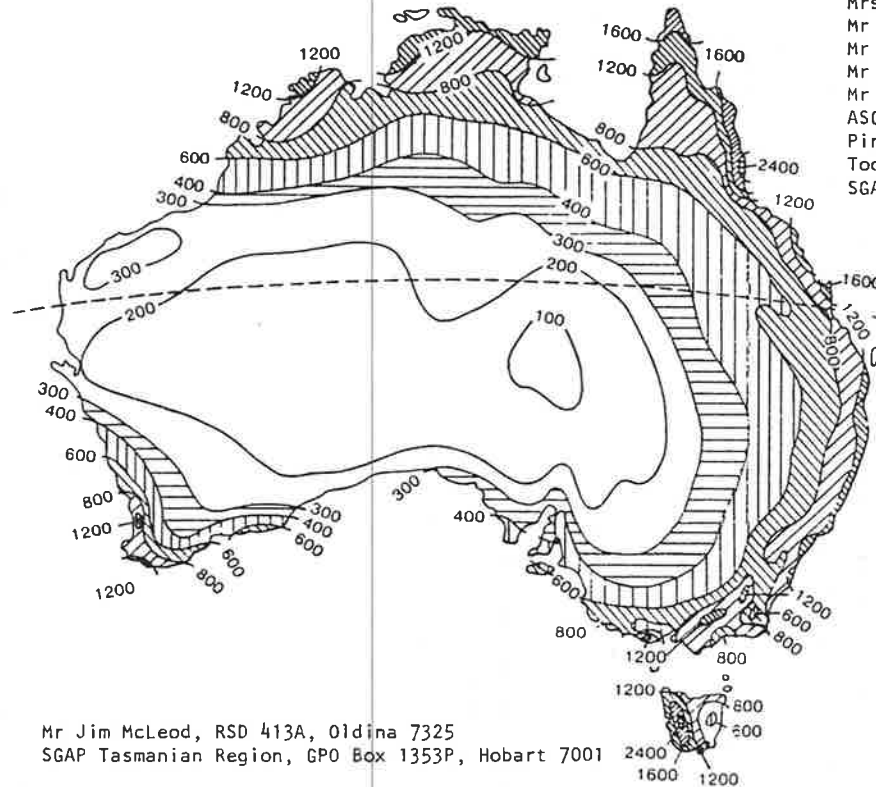
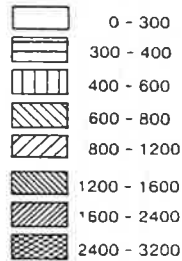
Distribution map
of *Eucalyptus leucoxylon* subspecies.
K. Rule (1991), *Muelleria* 7(3): 400

A small quantity of seed of *E. leucoxylon* subsp. *stephaniae* is available in the ESG seed bank for interested members.

EUCALYPTUS STUDY GROUP
MEMBERSHIP APRIL 1991

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Annual Rainfall (mm)



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SGAP SA Region, 19 Waikerie Ave, Hope Valley 5090

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New Eucalypts (cont.)

A new species of Stringybark *Eucalyptus mackintii* has been described by M.H. Kottet, P.Y. Ladiges & T. Whiffin (Aust. Syst. Bot. 3: 671-87, December 1990). A forest tree to 30 metres, with red-brown stringy bark persistent to small branches, and blue-green foliage, it is restricted to coastal plains around Bruthen, and foothills around Orbost in Victoria. Previously known as *E. aff. macrorhyncha*, it is now named for J.A. McKinty, a forester in the Orbost district who collected early specimens of the species.

It is distinguished from *E. macrorhyncha* mainly by bud and fruit characters (operculum conical rather than beaked). The possibility of the taxon being a hybrid (with *E. macrorhyncha* as one parent) was excluded by identification of leaf volatile oils and flavonoids. And cladistic analysis of adult and seedling morphology showed *E. aff. macrorhyncha* to be a distinct group and not intermediate between *E. macrorhyncha* and the other taxa included in the study.

A formidable 46 new species, and numerous new subspecies, have been published in four papers in the past two issues of *Telopea* [4(1)SEPT 90 and 4(2)MARCH 91] by L.A.S Johnson and K. Hill. Including taxa from WA, NT, Qld & Vic which have been defined during an overall revision of the eucalypts now in progress, most occur in NSW and have been published to validate names for use in the forthcoming 2nd volume of the Flora of New South Wales. These will be listed/discussed in the next issue of the newsletter.

A few changes to note now:

The following have been raised from subspecies to species -
Angophora euryphylla (formerly a subspecies of *A. costata*)
A. crassifolia (formerly a subspecies of *A. bakeri*)
Eucalyptus aquatica (formerly a var. of *E. ovata*)
E. dorrigoensis (formerly a var. of *E. benthamii*)
E. elliptica (formerly a subspecies of *E. mannifera*)
E. praecox (formerly a subspecies of *E. mannifera*)
E. latiuscula (formerly a var. of *E. moorei*)
E. tricarpa (formerly a subspecies of *E. sideroxylon*)
E. robertsonii (formerly a subspecies of *E. radiata*)

Reinstated from synonymy -
E. coolabah (from *microtheca*)
E. sparsifolia (from *oblonga*)
E. fergusonii
(from *paniculata*)

E. beyeriana is the new name provided for the taxon previously known as *E. beyeri* (whose type is apparently from a plant of hybrid origin, so the name can no longer be applied in its widely-used sense).

E. obstans is the new name for the Port Jackson Mallee which used to be called *obtusiflora* (the original type of which represents a WA species which itself used to be called *dongarraensis*).

E. parvula is the new name for what was known as *E. parvifolia*. (A new name is required because *parvifolia* is preoccupied by a fossil species).

E. ravida replaces the name *E. salubris* var. *glauca*, the WA Silver-topped Gimlet.

OLD GROWTH FOREST

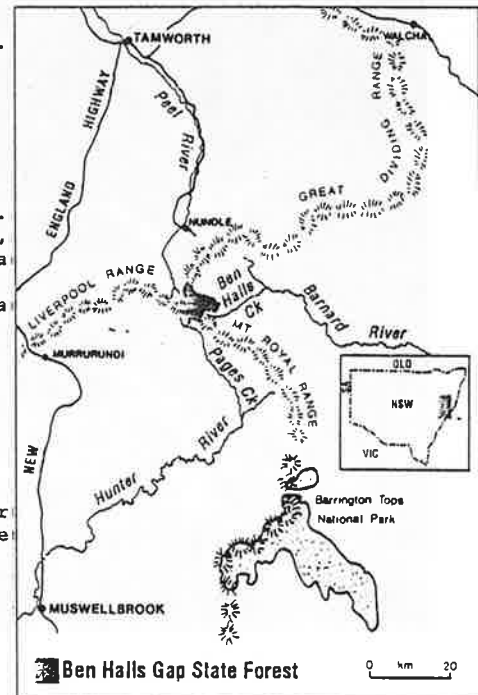
In WA: Hugh Seeds writes "Regarding your request for whereabouts of stands of old growth forest, Alex Syme on the South Coast Highway outside Denmark has 90 ha of old growth karri. That block also is the longest since burning of any forest round here. For old growth Rate's Tingle, Alex says the Soho and Gossing blocks in Mt Frankland NP should be visited. At Point Helier at the western end of William Bay he has seen old growth *E. calcicola*. Along Wilson's Inlet at the mouth of the Denmark River there are some old *E. cornuta*; and on Mt Hallowell are some specimens of *E. cornuta* in mallee form."

In NSW: Ben Halls Gap State Forest (2910 ha) is one of the last remaining high altitude old growth eucalypt forests in NSW, outstanding for its ecological diversity and integrity. Located at the pivot of 3 mountain ranges, the plateau contains the headwaters of the Peel, Barnard and Hunter rivers. The southern catchment is dominated by old growth *E. pauciflora* (Snow Gum). All the steeper slopes of the west and eastern catchments are dominated by all open forest of *E. obliqua* (Messmate) with *E. viminalis* (White Gum) and *E. dalrympleana* (mountain Gum) as codominants or subdominants. On lower slopes, *E. laevopinea* (Silvertop stringybark) is associated with, or replaces the messmate.

Messmate at Barrington Tops NP occurs in association with *E. fastigata* (Brown Barrel) and is a different forest type to that occurring at Ben Halls Gap.

"Although only 60 km SE of Tamworth, Ben Halls Gap is so inaccessible that it can take over two hours to reach through private property and over rough dry-weather-only tracks. The remote location and steep topography made the area ideal for cattle duffers, the main one being Ben Hall...after whom the area was named. Until now, remoteness of location has also been the salvation of Ben Halls Gap. While most of the Tamworth region has been cleared for agriculture and intensive forestry activity, including continued clearing of native forest for pine plantations, Ben Halls Gap forest has remained virtually untouched." (G. Mitchell, Habitat Australia, Dec 1990: 24-27)

Unfortunately logging proposals would necessitate the construction of a large number of roads to reach useful timber in pockets isolated by creeks and valleys. The entire Forest must be protected as a Nature Reserve. The fate of Ben Halls Gap Forest is a test of the conservation credibility of the next NSW Government.



Jim McLeod (Oldina, TAS) writes:

A recent weekend saw our local SGAP group (the North West Tasmanian region) travel to the high country of Cradle Mountain National Park to view the famous autumn colours of *Nothofagus gunnii* — a remnant of Gondwanaland, and our only winter deciduous tree. These trees were an ancient species, when a new kid arrived on the block — the Eucalypts.

Where our walk started at Lake Dove, at about 900 metres altitude, only 3 eucalypts exist because snow may lay on the ground for up to 3 months of the year. They are *E. coccifera* — what Tasmanians call snow gum; *E. subcrenulata* the Alpine Yellow Gum; and *E. gunnii* the Cider Gum. *E. coccifera* is very much like the alpine gum of NSW and Victoria (called Snow Gum) in that the trunk is generally twisted and gnarled, with a spiraling grain and lovely white/grey/cream colours. But the leaves are totally different being bluish when juvenile, and a blue-green colour mature, and very narrow like some of the peppermints.

Anyway after 4 hours walking we marched up to above the tree line, where the vegetation is generally windblown and stunted, and the "Fagus" was indeed impressive — brilliant shades of yellow and orange. The snow patches and remnant glacial lakes partly frozen, made the scene very unaustralain. The very rare *E. vernicosa* was many hours walk away, so we continued down into a valley of Pencil Pines (*Athrotaxis cupressoides*) and other Tasmanian pines and sighted a tree to give the taxonomists nightmares.

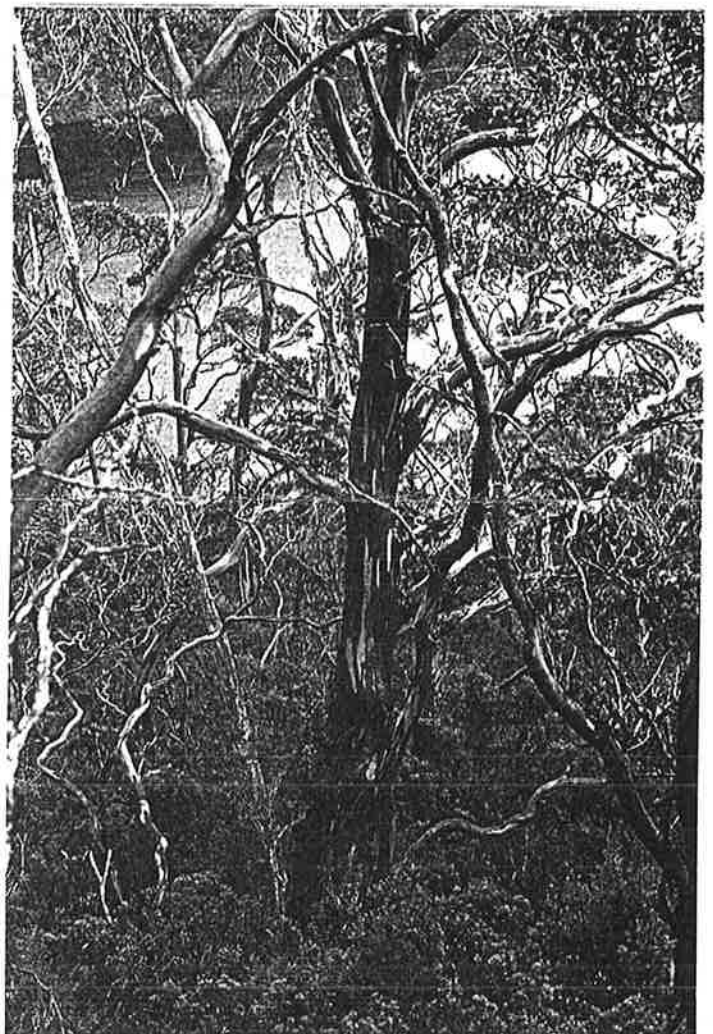
E. vernicosa is considered to be the bush form, *E. subcrenulata* the small tree form, and *E. johnstonii* the tall tree form of a cline. The leaves, buds and fruit are all similar, but their forms incredibly different. *E. vernicosa* is generally $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 metre tall in its natural habitat — some plants measured to 300 years old.

What we found was a group of trees 3 metres tall, with all apparent characteristics of *E. vernicosa*, but the size of *E. subcrenulata*. No wonder clines are so confusing.

No doubt the 3 species are still "separating" and evolving. I wonder what they will look like in 1000 years time. Unfortunately *E. vernicosa* grows in cold, windy, wet sites in Western Tasmania and does not survive dry sites. It may well be a casualty of the greenhouse effect — as will be our lovely deciduous *Nothofagus gunnii*.



Eucalyptus coccifera



Eucalyptus subcrenulata

OLIVE PINK EUCALYPTS?!

The **Olive Pink Flora Reserve** is situated on the east bank of the Todd River within the town boundaries of Alice Springs. The Reserve comprises 16 hectares with approximately 4 hectares being flat ground, the remaining being the hills surrounding the Reserve.

The average rainfall for Alice Springs is 250mm. However, rainfall is sporadic with 60 - 70% of the years in a 100 year rainfall pattern being below average with an exceptional rainfall every 10-20 years. (900mm in 1974 and 50mm in 1984).

Planting at the Reserve is limited to those species found growing naturally within a 200 - 300 km radius of Alice Springs. All plants are on drip irrigation, however, no matter how much water we give them, nothing makes them perk up more than a drop of rain even if only enough to wash their leaves.

Following is a list of Eucalypts growing at the Reserve with comments as to their age, size and condition. *denotes species found growing naturally at the Reserve.

***Eucalyptus camaldulensis** - several mature trees with majority being self sown.

Eucalyptus chippendalei: easy to germinate, however, I have not as yet produced good planting stock. Plantings at the Reserve too young to comment on at this stage.

Eucalyptus gamophylla - two well established 10 year old trees approximately 4m x 3-4m. Others of 5-7 years also doing well on coarse gravelly alluvium from the surrounding hills.

Eucalyptus gillenii - approximately 5 years old. Growth very slow but plants healthy and hardy 1-1.5m. Trees planted in coarse gravelly alluvium and also in a transition area of coarse gravelly alluvium and saline depression soils.

Eucalyptus gongylocarpa - several planted 5 years ago with varying degrees of growth. The largest tree is 4.5m high and losing its juvenile foliage. It is planted on the edge of a saline depression area. Another planted in coarse gravelly alluvium is 4m in height. Others planted on the sandy levee bank of the Todd River vary in height from 1.5m - 3m.

Eucalyptus intertexta - by far the most successful tree. Several 10 year old trees on sandy levee bank are 5 - 6m high. Three specimens planted 4 years ago in coarse gravelly alluvium are now 1.5 - 2m high. Several planted 3 years ago on the edge of a saline depression are .8 - 1m. All trees are very healthy.

Eucalyptus leucophloia - very poor.

Eucalyptus lucens - Two planted on coarse gravelly alluvium. One 3 years old only .8m high has continually been eaten by caterpillars and has never regained original vigor. The other planted 2 years ago is healthy, has fresh growth and is equal in height to the 3 year old plant.

Eucalyptus mannensis - one specimen on sandhill is 6 years old and 2.5m high, whereas others planted in an area of transition between coarse gravelly alluvium and saline depression soils with chenopod ground cover are 5 years old and approx. 1m - 1.5m high - a slow growth rate but quite healthy. One well established specimen of 10 years on coarse gravelly alluvium is 3m x 3.5 m. At present it is laden with seed capsules.

Eucalyptus microtheca - Not nearly as successful as intertexta. Three planted in saline depression area 4 years ago the best one being 1.3m in height now. Others planted 10 years ago on sandy levee bank are 8-9 m in height - some healthy and others can only be described as fair.

Eucalyptus normantonensis - two 1987 plantings on sandy levee bank struggling - only about .8m in height. However, another planting in a transition area between coarse gravelly alluvium and saline depression soils is in excellent condition and 1.5m high.

Eucalyptus odontocarpa - only one specimen at the Reserve planted in 1987 in coarse gravelly alluvium is very healthy - 1m x 1m.

Eucalyptus opaca - plantings on sandhill approx. 3m in height can be described as in fair to good condition. Plantings elsewhere on the reserve mostly in coarse gravelly alluvium in poor condition with little progress in the 3- 5 years they have been planted.

Eucalyptus orbifolia - very successful. Not a quick grower but extremely attractive and healthy. One specimen in particular planted on the edge of a saline depression is .9m x 1.5m with very dense foliage and in flower at present.

Eucalyptus oxymitra - One 10 year old specimen in coarse gravelly alluvium is approx. 3m in height. Plantings on sandhill in 1985 very successful being 3.5 m in height and healthy.

Eucalyptus pachyphylla - several well established trees approx. 2m x 2m in coarse gravelly alluvium. Flower well each year.

***Eucalyptus papuana** - Nine trees planted in 1985 in transition area between coarse gravelly alluvium and saline depression soils. One is now 4m high and others vary from .8m upwards. All planted under the same conditions and all good healthy stock of similar size to each other. Three trees were planted on a mounded area in 1986 and are now 2-2.3m high and doing very well. There are also 3 trees approx 10 years old which are about 5m in height and have white trunks now.

Eucalyptus sessilis - some well established trees in coarse gravelly alluvium, 2m x 2m and in good condition. Others planted in transitional area of coarse gravelly alluvium and saline depression soils not very successful.

Eucalyptus socialis - very successful in a variety of soil types.

Eucalyptus sparsa - only 2 specimens both 3 years old. One in fair condition .9m x 1m. The other specimen very poor.

Eucalyptus thozetiana - growth not rapid but very healthy plants. Most are 3-4 yrs old planted in coarse gravelly alluvium vary from 1m to 1.5 m in height.

Eucalyptus trivalvis - slow in growth but successful. A couple of specimens planted in 1984 are 1.5 m in height. Other plantings too recent to comment on.

Over all, the growth rate of all plants and not just the Eucalypts is slow, especially if comparing to growth rates in a home garden situation in Alice Springs. For example; I have a **Eucalyptus gillenii** which is 3 years old measuring 3m x 2m, a 2 year old **Eucalyptus lucens** which is 1.5m, a 4 year old **Eucalyptus orbifolia** which is 2.5m and a **Eucalyptus socialis** fell over at 4m and is now 1.5m x 1.5m.

The reason for the slow growth rate is probably a combination of exposure, little soil in some areas and poor soil in others plus in some cases not enough water. Salt is a big problem in many areas and also the lack of humus in the soil. We mulch with sand, where as; in my own garden there is a good build up of leaf litter and I dig compost in to every hole before planting. This is not possible at the Reserve.

Although all plants are on drip irrigation, drippers do become blocked and are not always detected for some time. In a home garden, plants are much closer together so a blocked dripper is not quite so detrimental to the growth of a plant as it can draw on water from surrounding plants.

The slow rate of growth can be frustrating to those of us who work at the Reserve, and I sometimes wonder if plants are progressing at all but looking at slides taken a few years ago and writing an article like this shows that the plants are growing and more important, is the condition of the plant rather than the rate of growth. Most of the Eucalypts in good condition will be stronger and hardier plants and more able to withstand the stressful conditions of living in Central Australia.

Connie Spencer

August 1990