

## EUCALYPTUS STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER No. 28 JULY 1993

Group Leader  
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Dear Members,

The lack of newsletters from this end is a fair reflection of the lack of general correspondence. Furthermore I have been pre-occupied with building a kit home to lock-up, and with medical scans and some disquieting results. Anyone who feels at all put out by the absence of newsletters during this period is invited to continue as a member without a sub fee until you feel satisfied again, but please do keep corresponding to show your interest in membership of this study group. Is, by any chance, my editorial practice of reprinting members letters putting anyone off from writing in?

Many new members have recently joined us, so I recommend we decide upon a group project to keep us all in contact even as we each pursue our own eucalypt interests. Have you all noticed that the journal Australian Plants has not run an article, or even a photo, on eucalypts for about 20 issues?

The ASGAP Conference to be held in Sydney from September 25 to October 1 this year invited us to mount a display of the work we are doing, to which, having gone bush, I could not respond by the March deadline. Such a display, of course, need not be on a group project. A poster (for future conferences) could display photographs and captions of individual endeavours around the country. So let's get out cameras and do a photo essay on what interests us. (And of us doing it!)

A promising letter from the SGAP NSW Secretary deals with a computer-based interactive system called EUCLID for identification of eucalypts being developed by CSIRO (to be made available on CD-ROM when completed, but currently on magnetic disk). Interested people are being sought to trial this system.

Back in 1985 a former Study Group Co-ordinator Jo Walker remarked: "The main aim of the Study Groups is to introduce less well-known Australian Plants into horticultural use. Many such often attractive plants are unavailable to gardeners because of difficulties in propagation or because little is known of their requirements under garden conditions. Study Groups undertake the task of studying a genus or a closely related group of genera in order to overcome some of these problems". (*Aust. Plants* 13(104):169, 1985.) We need a comprehensive seedbank for our members to be able to trial as many species as possible.

A number of members have requested a new seed list. As you may appreciate this takes considerable time to type up, so I am investigating getting this done by computer, to be sent out as soon as possible. Frankly, the ESG seed bank has done nothing but diminish over the years. So people expecting a list with exciting new species available will be disappointed. I have resolved to write to the Australian Tree Seed Centre in Canberra about purchasing seed. The Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney has eucalypt seed, but their stated policy is "to maintain a modest list of fresh seed from *accurately documented* field collections, primarily of Australian species. Each year the selection of seed gives some emphasis to rare and endangered species as well as to interesting and horticulturally useful plants. We welcome exchange of lists offering documented native material from natural habitats. Individuals and commercial organisations will not normally be supplied with seed". Ideally, for all our seed collections, voucher specimens of the parent plant and field notes should be lodged at local herbaria, to maximise the research value of the seedlings. This is a lot to ask of members of our study group when they do collect seed. We need to obtain seed from professional seed distributors, rather than from seed merchants where even locality data is usually not provided with seedlots.

I would like to call for someone to act as Secretary, or Treasurer, Editor etc. as occurs in some other Study Groups so effectively. Particularly, someone to answer non-member queries would be of great assistance.

#### New Members

Mark Ashdown, 41 Malahang Pde, Heidelberg West VIC 3081  
Brian Collis, 6 Cowarra Close, Wauchope NSW 2446  
Ms K. Cornwall, 11 Orca St, Mt Eliza VIC 3930  
Werner Kutshe, 41 Norrie Ave, Clovelly Park SA  
Mr & Mrs Graeme Lee, DairyvilleRd, Karangi NSW 2450  
Wendy Mills, 31 Oxley Hwy, Bagnoo NSW 2446  
Klaus Querengasser, PO BOX 73, St Lucia QLD 4067  
Gayle Quirke, Brown's Rd, Murchison East VIC 3610  
Margery Stutchbury, PO BOX 331, Bundaberg QLD 4670  
SGAP Foothills Group, PO BOX 65 Boronia VIC 3155

#### JULY 1993

#### FINANCIAL STATEMENT

| RECEIPTS        |              | EXPENDITURE |             |
|-----------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Brought forward | 175.60       | Copying     | 126.90      |
| Bank interest   | 5.64         | Postage     | 64.05       |
| Subs/donations  | 489.55       | Stationery  | 30.64       |
| Sale backissues | <u>19.85</u> | Bank duty   | <u>0.22</u> |
|                 | 690.64       |             | 221.81      |
| BALANCE         | \$468.83     |             |             |

## Members Letters

*Tony Bean (Townsville QLD) NOV 92:*

The sad story about "The Distribution of Queensland Eucalypts" is that it is out of print. I had intended to, and still intend to update and reprint it, but realistically that could be a year away or maybe longer. I was absolutely amazed at the strong demand for that book. I could only afford to have 50 copies done at the time, and was worried that half of those would be stuck in the cupboard gathering dust and cobwebs. As it turned out I could have sold 200 easily. I have enclosed the two Eucalypt papers of mine that you won't have. The yellow bloodwood paper was a long time in the making, but that made its publication particularly satisfying.

It's good to see that David Kleinig has joined. He is a friend of mine, and a great bloke. You might be able to con him into writing about seed collecting for the newsletter. I have two throwing ropes, nothing high-tech about them, just simple ropes with a weight tied to one end, but I wouldn't dare go bush without them. No.1 is a 5mm diameter cotton cord, 20 metres long, with a 500 gram machined steel weight on the end (given to me by David K). No.2 is a 4mm diameter ordinary (sisal?) rope, 30 metres long, with a 350 gram cog attached. I found the cog on the side of the road one day.

I use No.2 if the branch is particularly high (13-14m), as it is easier to hurl it to great heights, but because the cord is only 4mm across it can break if the branch is too large or uncooperative. No.1 is stronger, but unable to be thrown that extra metre which may make all the difference. I would never use a nylon throwing rope as it can (and invariably will) burn your hand during the throwing action. Some people use a fishing line with a sinker attached, propelled by a slingshot. In theory, it is very good and heights in excess of 20 metres can be achieved, but in practice it is bad news because the line is always getting tangled up, and the whole process can be very time-consuming.

*Werner Kutsche (Clovelly Park SA) NOV 92:*

My girlfriend used to have a garden consisting of lawn measuring 20m x 20m. A visit to Western Australia and some persuasion has converted it to 3/4 native plants and 1/4 lawn. The base soil is clay. We have built up a large part with a local sandy loam with good results.

The *Eucalyptus* species that we have planted are:

*E. preissiana* (Sep 90) - now ~1m x 2m in the clay

*E. watsoniana* (Oct 91) - now ~1m tall in sandy loam over clay; most leaves went dark purple-black during our wetter than normal winter but is now reshooting from ends of branches quite profusely

*E. scoparia* (Oct 92) - ~0.1m tall in sandy loam over clay

*E. erythronema* (Jul 92) - is struggling in the clay

*E. websteriana* (Aug 92) - hasn't grown whatsoever but also hasn't died - is in shallower sandy loam over clay.

We had an *E. ficifolia* but that drowned during the heavy "spring" rains. As a result of this, I have taken an interest in trying to graft some more "finicky" eucalypts onto those which can tolerate sitting in wet boggy clay (clay goes rock hard - well almost - during summer). I would like to know a bit more about what active members participate in. I don't know whether experimenting with grafting constitutes being an active member. At some time in the future, when finances look more favourable, I hope to purchase some land where I can plant "the eucalypts which are too big or won't grow in the backyard".

[Most Study Groups no longer distinguish between 'active' and 'passive' members, and anyone just interested in eucalypts are appreciated in the ESG. -Ed.]

*Dorothy Cassidy (Warranwood VIC) FEB 93:*

I have taken note of the group's suggestion that we identify our local species. I can now tell/recognise *E. polyanthemos* and *E. obliqua* at - well - 1 metre... A member's suggestion that National Parks and reserves were our gardens seemed excellent, and I have been working at identifying Eucalypts at nearby Parks. It is possible in the future that we could provide a guide to Parks identifying sites of species for visitors, etc.

*Henri DeBono (France) MAR 93:*

I feel much flattered when I read the ESG Newsletter No 27 (Oct 92) by seeing the reference to my last letter and very much interested by all information you quoted from Emigrant Eucalypts by RF Zacharin concerning the introduction of *Eucalyptus* trees in North Africa. Meanwhile I've received from Bower Bird Books The Gardener's Guide to Eucalyptus by Holliday & Watton then I've had the pleasure to see again the trees of my born-country and also to discover some others wonderful as *E. ficifolia*, for example, I was thinking about for my garden on the French Riviera.

Brian Collis, (Wauchope NSW) MAR 93:

I have a 3 hectare property at Beechwood and on that part which was once the old bank of the Hastings River I am in the process of growing West Aust eucalypts on the well drained high ground. The trees I have at this time either got in the ground for six months or in pots include *astringens*, *caesia*, *dielsii*, *diversicolor*, *erythronema*, *erythrocoris*, *eremophila*, *ficifolia*, *grossa*, *gardneri*, *jacksonii*, *lanepoollei*, *marginata*, *macrandra*, *occidentalis*, *platypus*, *salmonophloia*, *steadmanii*, *stricklandii*, *todtiana*, *torquata*, and others I cannot identify. I also have seedlings of many other species which were sown only a week ago. I hope to be in a position to contribute to the group as in spite of the high rainfall and Jan/Feb humidity the WA trees are generally surviving and some thriving.

Rhoda Jeavons (Kulnura NSW) APR 93:

A few comments on the many issues raised in the recent debate on the newsletter format. We need information on items of interest at all levels of members' dedication. Personally I can't cope with all the new names and newly described species, but they need to be publicised for those to whom they are relevant. General tree-interest articles such as the ones on frost, growing for seed, florist work etc. are very welcome. I, too, would welcome a simple foolproof method of identification.

In general our eucs are thriving, but this year's planting of *E. resinifera* has revealed that this species seems to need more warmth to germinate than most euc seeds we've grown - we had a very cold spring. In passing, this area, south of Newcastle, has a summer/autumn rainfall pattern, generally mild sunny and dry April/May, some rain June/July and storm rains till about Christmas. *E. leucoxyton* died back and performed badly - removed; *E. angustissima* died; *E. henryi* are 5m and look better than the local *E. maculata*; *E. torelliana* has no beetle problems; *E. grandis* shrugged off Christmas beetles in what was reportedly a 'bad' year; *E. ptychocarpa* refuses to flower and looks miserable; *E. ficifolia* flowered twice since Christmas; *E. caesia* flowers and grows slowly but is not really thriving.

Do other members know about the Queensland forestry 'bags'? These are white polyethylene 'tubes' cut to about 1m and put round 3 stakes set in a triangle round the tree (bags are 1m diameter and have a cuff turned up inside to trap moisture). We have used (and reused) them over the last 3 years and have had some quite remarkable results, including hail protection. Cost here is about 80c per bag (singly), 3 half 6ft stakes at 40c each - a cost all up \$1.20 but many times reusable, and in terms of establishing really small tube trees vs potting on and holding for months, almost negligible. Plastic is available from NSW forestry and in rolls from other sources. Trees become 'dependant' on bags - if they are left much after they top the bags they need to be staked.

Twelve months ago we bought tubes of *E. calophylla*, *glaucescens*, *polyanthemos*, *cinerea* in Victoria, and owing to circumstances beyond me, they got no further than being potted on. By Christmas they were close to 1m and totally rootbound. I de-potted them, cut and teased the rootball, and put them in large pots with potting sand under and all round them and returned them to the nursery. Early April with sand shaken and hosed off they went into large holes with a huge curtain of beautiful undisturbed roots.

Margery Stutchbury (Bundaberg QLD) APR 93:

I live at Bundaberg on the coast north & west of Fraser Island in Queensland. I have grown and flowered *Eucalyptus torquata* and *E. ficifolia*, but lost them after a lot of rain. Our soil is sandy and usually drains well, so it is only after very heavy rain that I lose things.

At present I have *E. eximia nana* which would be about 3 years old and 2m high, no flowers yet. As my husband & I are licensed by National Parks to care for sick and injured koalas, the other eucalypts I have planted are all koala food trees. These include *E. tereticornis*, *E. microcorys*, *E. dunnii*, *E. crebra*, *E. drepanophylla*, *E. resinifera* and *E. robusta*.

On a recent trip to Atherton Tableland in north Qld, we travelled southwest from Atherton through Ravenshoe and Mt Garnet on the Kennedy Highway, turned right after the Forty Mile Scrub National Park into the Gulf Development Road. A short time later turned onto a corrugated dirt road which led to the Undara Lava Tubes. Visiting the larva tubes was a truly wonderful experience. The area was until a few years ago a cattle station, and now a National Park with the Larval Tube resort being managed by the former cattle station owners. The accommodation is in converted railway carriages and tents are also available and meals are had in dining cars or out in the open with camp fire at breakfast. To get to the point - there are many *Eucalyptus miniata* all around, and although they were not in flower, I was thrilled to see them growing naturally for the first time. Other eucalypts in the area included *E. platypoda*, *E. camaldulensis*, *E. confertiflora*, *E. crebra*, *E. erythrophloia*, *E. dolichocarpa*, *E. microcarpa*.

I was also interested to see *Grevillea pteridifolia*, *G. parallela*, *G. mimosoides*, *G. glauca*, *G. dryandri* & *G. umbellata* growing. Also the "bootlace" *Hakea lorea* with its fine leaves hanging like bootlaces! A very interesting place to visit if you are up that way.

Gillian McDonald (Clergate NSW) MAY 93:

We have been in the process of building an extension onto our house over the past year, and bricklaying, concreting etc. have seen to it that the garden and tree establishment programs have been sadly neglected.

Our trees have grown exceptionally well this year, my only regret is that I didn't get totally carried away at planting time and plant thousands of them!!! Practically every tree over 2 years old is covered in buds, including 5 *E. caesia* which I was assured would not survive here. So I'm quite delighted.

The only other *Eucalyptus* species worthy of note is the very prolific yellow/cream flowering variety of *E. melliodora*. The offspring of a magnificent tree not far from here have all kept their flowering capabilities, and are literally covered in buds. The few that flowered last year did not set seed, but I am hoping that this situation will not recur.

I have become especially interested in Lance Cockburn's experiences with *Eucalyptus* bud production. I would like to try a number of the species he suggests to see how they accept our frosty climate. The larger, more spectacular flowering species generally seem to dislike the cold. But then the *E. caesias* are thriving! (Two of the five trees have a lump of concrete placed next to them. I read in one of the backcopies of Australian Plants that added calcium increases frost tolerance. These two trees are certainly the largest of the five!)

Werner Kutshe (Clovelly Park SA) MAY 93:

My plans for some land on which to plant will hopefully materialise at the end of June. The land is 12.5-13 acres in size and has a gentle slope overlooking the dairy paddocks adjacent to the River Murray at Ponde near Mannum. Soil tests which I have carried out indicate a pH of 8.5 and very low salinity. The soil type is a sandy loam with areas of rocky limestone. At present there are a few rabbits which need to be eradicated as well as horehound weed. I also want to put up a rabbit-proof fence which is a bit costly but should be worth it in the long run. My plan is to plant a large variety of *Eucalyptus* species and to observe what effect the relatively drier climate will have on their growth rate, size, degree of flowering etc. I also plan to plant *Acacia* species mainly of SA origin as well as other dryland plants which should, in theory, thrive here.

Unfortunately I am desperately short on information on eucalypt species growing in latitudes north of the SA/NT border. The type of information I require would be the following: name, locality, rainfall, size, flower colour and bark texture (rough or smooth). I would also like a list of rare and endangered species and their seed availability as I think these are of high priority to plant. The amount of seed which I require wouldn't be very much as I probably would only plant a few of each species to allow space for a large variety.

We are still attempting to grow some of the monsoonal eucalypts eg. *E. phoenicea*, *E. ptychocarpa*, and *E. miniata* although the latter is likely to be banished to Ponde because of limited space in the garden. At present we have 10 trees in pots spending the daylight hours in the sunshine and the nocturnal hours in the shed as our nights are becoming very cold (eg. 3.5 degrees this morning!) We have not had much rain to date, and daytime temperatures are between 18 & 24 degrees. The species in the pots are 2 healthy *E. ptychocarpa*, 2 sick-looking *E. miniata* and 3 healthy and 3 not-so-healthy *E. phoenicea*.

On the home front, most of the eucalypts planted in the garden are growing quite well. *E. preissiana* which is the oldest (ca. 2.5 years) and measuring 2x2m has quite a number of buds and should be a sight when it eventually flowers. *E. watsoniana* is looking reasonably healthy although some of the leaf edges are becoming discoloured. I may have to try the copper sulphate treatment mentioned in the October 92 newsletter. The remaining eucalypts are still quite small, some battling bugs and starting to win! To date no success with the grafting attempts.

Klaus Querengasser (St Lucia QLD) MAY 93:

Although I have a general interest in the genus, I am particularly interested in the cultivation of rare and threatened species, and in their preservation in the wild. Currently I have growing *Eucalyptus argophloia*, *E. curtisii*, *E. dunnii*, *E. eximia*, *E. orbifolia*, *E. planchoniana* and *E. scoparia*, all of which have been planted out in the last twelve months; I also have *E. argophloia*, *E. baileyana*, *E. conglomerata* and *E. leucoxyton* ssp. *megalocarpa* awaiting planting.

Bill Butler (Parkes NSW) JUN 93:

I now have over 120 species growing of which about 13 are not known to me although I'm sure they are common. Perhaps if you are ever in this area, you might like to call in and identify some for me. [I'm sure other roving members could do this better than me! -Ed.] One of my problems recently has been three swamp wallabies that have taken up residence here. They completely strip some small trees while leaving the next door one of the same species alone. I can put guards around many trees but it is difficult with large numbers, and some have to be protected till they are about 2 metres tall. If you know of a way to discourage wallabies from browsing young trees, I'd be happy to hear it. [I remember a *Quantum* program on TV ages ago exploring the use of urine around tree seedlings to deter wallabies to whom young eucalypts were "like lollipops" -Ed.]

