



Eucalyptus Study Group

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Greetings all, and I hope you enjoy the 44th newsletter of the ESG, and my last as leader. There is very welcome news on the leadership front as the Friends of Peter Francis Points Arboretum in Coleraine, Victoria have agreed to take on the role.

As I write this newsletter, we are enduring yet another record breaking heatwave here in the southwest. Margaret River yesterday had its hottest March day on record, 39°, and today we are set for the same. Back in December the soil moisture readings were already at March levels, so the flora and fauna are doing it tough out there. Although we have had some rain (on the farm we have had 4 inches so far this year) the evaporation levels are at an all time high because of much higher minimum temperatures, as well as these late season heatwaves which have become characteristic in the last decade.

This story is echoed all over Australia I know, and I'm sure many of you are like me and simply shaking your heads at the changes we are enduring – the combination of climate change, escalating development and burgeoning population is something we haven't had to deal with before.

We will be leaving the farm in April, our property has been sold, and we are moving to a small, 1 acre bush block and house about 1.5 km from Margaret River, in the suburbs really. Water comes out of taps there with no effort from us, and our garbage is magically spirited away. It will be like childhood again! From 145 to 1 acre is quite daunting, but it is a nice piece of marri forest in good heart, and it could certainly do with some loving care. It's quite scary what people do to their bush blocks. Enhance them with every weed available at the garden centre – agapanthus, ivy, vinca and honeysuckle just for some. And for the eucalypt fans, they have planted bluegums (*E. globulus*) and rosegums (*E. grandis*). Fortunately except for the grandis, none of these have thrived under the canopy of dense *C. calophylla* and understorey, and we can access and remove the grandis relatively easily with the services of professional tree removers.

This will be my last personal message, so I would like to express my most sincere thanks to Elspeth for her help and support; she has been a tower of strength as we have tried to negotiate our way. I also would like to especially thank Leigh Murray and Brenda Galey for their regular contributions and unfailing support. Thanks also to the handful of you who have contributed articles and got in touch to express your approval of the newsletters. You know who you are! Please continue to be in touch with the new leaders – it is quite a daunting thing when you send out 50 or so newsletters and are met by a deafening silence.

Margaret

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New Leader for Study Group.

Although I'm still waiting on the stamp of approval from ASGAP for the change, the Study Group co-coordinator has given me permission to announce that the new leaders will be the Friends of Peter Francis Points Arboretum, PO Box 29, Coleraine, Vic 3315

Their email address is thepoints@datafast.net.au and the contact person is Jenny Kane, 03 5575 2202.

I am enormously grateful to the Friends and Jenny for taking this on, and to Elspeth for "brokering the deal". I think it will be a tremendous asset to the study group to be led from Victoria, when most of the members are on the east coast. It will also offer an opportunity to the Friends to promote the value of the Arboretum.

Please send your 2007-8 subs to Elspeth as before, and as the next newsletter will be coming from the friends, they will provide future direction.

From Members

Losses

by Leigh Murray NSW

At Tuross Head on the NSW South Coast there are long dry periods, with the odd 100mm downpour. It is after these downpours that we've had quite a few sudden deaths of previously healthy-looking plants, possibly caused by a root fungus such as *Phytophthora cinnamomi*.

Last summer at Tuross it was unusually hot and dry, with a 43 degree corker on New Year's Day. We lost quite a few young eucalypts – some suddenly, and some by degrees. Most were species that are listed in the "Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants" (by Elliott and Jones) as being sensitive to *Phytophthora cinnamomi*. Those losses included *Eucalyptus caesia ssp. magna*, *E. pyriformis*, *E. erythronema*, *E. albida*, *E. viridis*, *E. tetraptera*, *E. burracoppinensis*, *E. 'Torwood'*, *E. websteriana* and *E. incrassata*. Some susceptible species are still surviving, mainly those perched up amongst rocks.

Does anyone have any experience with such treatments as Yates Anti Rot (phosphorous acid), which is applied as a foliar spray to treat root rot?

I'd like to know how toxic it is to people, plants and wildlife. The documentation suggests that it isn't very toxic at all. But as someone who is very sensitive to chemicals, I have to be ultra careful. I usually avoid chemicals, especially sprays.

If phosphorous acid is a useful treatment of low toxicity, how often would it need to be applied to make any difference? (The most I'd be able to do would be a few times a year.) The documentation suggests that it can be harmful to some plants – does anyone know if it harms any eucs? And is it safe to use on very young

plants?

Are there any methods to help avoid root rot, other than raised beds, sharply drained?

I'll replace the losses with species listed as resistant, and I'll try to save as many of our beloved eucs as I can. Some of the plants lost last summer were at least six years old, so they did do OK for quite a few years in these conditions.

*Lee, you will find all the information you need at the new www.dieback.org.au website, especially on this page <http://www.dieback.org.au/go/managing-dieback>.
Phosphonic (phosphoric) acid is a very non-toxic chemical to use, probably comparable with common table salt. I have used it and it has no odour or irritating effects. It is more effective as a preventative than treatment, but does confer some treatment benefits if injected. It is quite cheap and easy to use. If you are unable to access that site for any reason let me know and I will forward all the info to you. I don't have room for it in this newsletter, but perhaps it would be a good idea to get permission to print the info in the next one.
Cheers, Margaret.*

News from Elspeth

The whole garden scene here (Montrose, Vic) is going to have to change with our strict water restrictions. We have decided not to open the garden next year, and only water a few things close to the house. The rest of the garden will just have to be a demonstration of what WILL survive without any watering. It is a bit liberating in a way...it will save hours in Jan/ Feb - perhaps the days of our 'Pretty Gardens' are over. the eucs are some of the few things that have appreciated our dry winter.

Lindsay Daniels mentioned in his "comment or suggestions" that he is still involved with Landcare. He comments on doing winter sowing of Euc seed with the minimum maximum temperature of 25 deg. for his local species to germinate (QLD).

I was interested in this as after years of finding our summer not long enough to really get euc. seedlings going before our winter starts in Southern Vic (and wrecks them), for the first time ever I planted my seed in June in a polyhouse. Now by Nov they are strong and will be much more advanced to cope with our damp, humid winter.

Judith Baghurst reports..."Five years ago we moved to a 21 ha property just above Port Elliot on the Fleurieu Peninsula - denuded farmland with 1 eucalypt, a few sheoaks and plenty of olives, boxthorn and briar rose...about half is now planted with native trees and shrubs, mostly indigenous, and mostly from Trees For Life seed. As some 5000 of these were planted the year after we bought the property, in 1998, they are well established now and growing well.

We have also established a large native plants garden which was growing beautifully, but the drought has certainly hit us now, and it is sad to see plants dying. We have no water other than tank water of which there is sufficient for household use only. All household water is recycled but this is not nearly enough.

Hence there will need to be some big changes when we finally get rain, but that is all part of the challenge of learning to live in an unpredictable and comparatively dry climate."

I wonder if Judith would like to tell us about "Trees For Life", and also how she has coped with the drought?

I have sometimes wondered if, since we are trying to widen the limits of growth of different euc species, if it would be interesting if we each listed perhaps the 6 eucs that are doing well in our gardens that are furthest from their natural habitat.

To start the ball rolling, the ones doing best for me at Montrose, Vic, are:
Euc. curtisii, erythrandra, pendens, leichhardtii, erythrocorys, eximia.

And mine would be E. scoparia (how I will miss these most beautiful of trees), E.microcorys, E. nichollii, E. leucoxydon, E maculata and E. resinifera!

SEED BANK NEWS:

DELETIONS

E.apiculata
clarksoniana
crucis
dichromophloia
erythrocorys
exilipes
mitchelliana
stenostoma
websteriana

ADDITIONS

uncinata
victrix
burracoppinensis
pimpiniana hybrid (torquata)
cretata
luehmaniana
canescens ssp beadellii
lacrimans
diversifolia ssp hesperia
preissiana ssp lobata
macrocarpa ssp elachantha
serpentinicola

CORRECTIONS

floribunda = Angophora floribunda
nutans = cernua
papuana = aparrerinja
codonocarpa = approximans ssp codonocarpa

thanks to **Allan Raine** for donation of *Euc serpentinicola*. This is closely related to *Euc moorei*, and is found in the Serpentine Hills, north coast NSW.

Phil Hempel

Growth Rate of Eucalypts

Phil wrote:

Hi Margaret, I am a member of the Eucalyptus Study Group and thought you may be interested in the following for the news letter.

I live on 7 acres in Diamond Creek on the outskirts of Melbourne and have started a planting program of natives with most eucalyptus being mallee form. The long term aim is to have a small arboretum to show home gardeners some of the options of eucalyptus that are available. A lot of gardeners ask for quick growing gums to fill a void or hide a neighbour without being advised of the final outcome i.e. fast growing generally equals tall which equals trouble which equals expense to remove. Where as mallee forms may grow slower but can give better colour, better screening effect and less expense if removal is required.

But getting onto my main point which is the problem of buying advanced trees. My wife, Diane, always wants to buy the more advanced trees as she believes they are a better option as they are already 2m+ high. I have argued for years that tube are a better option as the will soon catch up to the advanced tree, they will better root to the ground, are easier to look after and are far cheaper.

To prove the point I planted out her advanced trees and at the same time planted out a number of tubes. After three years the tube stock was taller then the advanced ones, were sturdier and looked a lot better. The attached photo sheets shows the comparison. Diane accepts the point, but you know how it goes, still wants to buy advanced trees?

Since the advanced trees were brought at a market without name tags I have had a guess at what they are so the names on the left hand side could be incorrect.

Kind regards
Phil Hempel
349 Diamond Creek Rd
Diamond Creek Vic

Photographic examples of Eucalyptus growth - comparing planting tube stock as compared to advanced

trees. All photos show trees all planted three years ago, in the same soil and treated the same

Advanced trees, the two below were at least 2m high "advanced" trees. Possibly *E. drummondii*, left; *C. flavescens*, right.



Tubestock, left to right, *E. lehmannii*, *C citriodora*, *E. forrestiana*.



A worthwhile project planting up your arboretum Phil. A word of caution, while it is well proven that tubestock Eucalypts grow faster, are more wind firm and thrive better than advanced specimens, to set up a valid scientific experiment you do need to plant the same species. E. drummondii for example is a pretty slow grower, while your tube stock species are all rockets! Good luck convincing the wife. (And the other advantage is that you don't have to dig such a big hole!)

Request for Help

Trevor Seppings writes:

I was wondering if it was possible for you to include in your newsletter, a number of eucalypt that I am hoping to identify in the Melbourne area. I thought that maybe other members may have seen the types I am looking for and could contact me with their whereabouts. My list is fairly extensive but any help you could give me would be greatly appreciated.

E.brockwayi	E.crebra	E.gunnii	E.nitida
E.coccifera	E.dundasii	E.melanophloia	E.pauciflora ssp debeuzevillei
E. cordata	E.flindersii	E.mitchelliana	E.steedmanii

E.synandra	E.transcontinentalis	E.rodwayi	E.salubris
E.wandoo	E.yarraensis		

If anyone can help me my phone number is 00448853361 or my email is lynda.anne.sharp@bigpond.com
From Trevor Seppings

Eucalypts around Kununurra, August 2006

John Purse

With my family, I spent 10 days around Kununurra in late July/early August 2006. Our reason for being there was bushwalking, and eucalypts were just one of the many fascinating features of this part of the Kimberley. This short article describes some of the eucalypts we encountered, with comments on their flowering.

Kununurra has its own small but spectacular national park within walking distance of the town centre – the Hidden Valley, also known as the Mirima N.P. The principal eucalypts in the park are species that are widespread in the Top End: *Eucalyptus miniata* (Darwin woollybutt), *E. tetradonta* (Darwin stringybark) and *Corymbia polycarpa* (Long-fruited bloodwood). None of these was in flower, and the bloodwoods had no signs of flower buds or of recent flowering. One rarity in the park is *Corymbia cliftoniana*, seemingly restricted to a few trees in one small side valley which has a short trail: the Demboong Banan Gap Trail. This species has very distinctive globose nuts, and it was a very few old nuts that were the only means of identification; there were no signs of any flower buds or maturing capsules.

The most distinctive eucalypt of the uncultivated savannah plains around Kununurra is *Eucalyptus pruinosa* (Silver box), a small tree with glaucous juvenile leaves on the entire crown. These trees were covered with inflorescences on which the attractive pale yellow flowers were just starting to appear.

Our main bushwalk was in the Carr-Boyd range, south-west of the town. The glory of this area was *Eucalyptus phoenicia*, the somewhat mis-named Scarlet gum. The large orange inflorescences and rough yellow-brown bark of this species were a dominant and striking feature of the rocky hillsides throughout the area. On still harsher sites, specimens of *Eucalyptus brachyandra* (Tropical red box) were widespread but infrequent, and usually growing out of fissures in sandstone cliffs. Their twisted, gnarled form and their isolated locations, well away from most other trees, made them easy to spot. There were no signs of flower buds on them, and only a few of their tiny mature capsules were present.

The activities of bower birds first alerted me to the presence of *Corymbia ferruginea*, the Rusty bloodwood, in the hills. The pale, slightly rough nuts of this species were a feature of the bower collections made some birds. This bloodwood flowers during the wet, and the nuts I saw looked fairly fresh.

We generally kept to the attractive creek systems in the hills, but crossed one large flood plain which supported a sizeable population of *Eucalyptus bigalerita*, the Northern salmon gum, with its distinctive deltoid leaves. At this time in the dry season, the bark of this species was uniformly pure white. Later, this bark falls off to reveal fresh pink-orange bark which gives the species its common name. These gums were just starting to flower, and flower buds were prolific.

Some sheltered damp creeks and gullies were home to small dense groves of *Corymbia ptychocarpa* (Swamp bloodwood). We had seen this as a street tree in Darwin a few days earlier, where it had evidently flowered profusely several weeks previously. However, the trees in the range showed no sign of flower buds or of having flowered recently, and the mature nuts were very rare. There seems no obvious reason why only one of the *Corymbia* species we encountered appeared to have initiated flower buds in 2005/06, especially as other eucalypts had generally done so freely. I am intrigued about this, and wonder what environmental cue was lacking.

The three Corymbia species in our part of the southwest, John, C. calophylla, C. haematoxylon and C. ficifolia are very capricious in their flowering. All kinds of theories abound, from signaling a dry season to signalling a

wet one, but I'm not sure if any scientific explanation is about. This year, 2007, our local *C. calophylla* is flowering sparsely for the 3rd year in a row, we have had a fairly dry winter and a very hot dry summer. The same species 50 km away on the Swan Coastal Plain has had a bumper season, with most prolific flowering. They have had the driest winter on record, and an extreme summer. By the way, our local *Corymbia* species are apparently relicts of the wetter, warmer prehistoric past – most *Corymbia* are tropical and subtropical species.

Incidentally, I had a trip to Broome in August, where our older daughter is now living. The Broome Council are doing a terrific job of planting Kimberley natives into their streetscapes, to try to remove the "Lord McAlpine Tropical Balinese Paradise" problem. They have planted *E. bigalerita* as a street tree, and in parks. What an absolutely stunning tree.



Above left: *Eucalyptus phoenicea*



Above right: *Eucalyptus bigalerita*, Carr Boyd Ranges

***Eucalyptus* "Pingrup Pink"**

A sneak preview of the rescue of a "lost" Eucalypt.

From Hazel's email:

I was going through a few of these photos of the above and remembered I had mentioned to you about Mum's *Eucalyptus* she found at Pingrup 30 odd years ago, and so far it has not found a named and no longer exists in the wild as the area where it was got bulldozed before anything could be done. Her tree is going under the dozer as her' block which has been sold is developed now she has gone. I thought I would e-mail some pics so you can add it to your collection lists for posterity.

I do have a seedling from it and have also managed to strike a cutting which is growing well in a pot. George Lullfitz's grafter says he thinks he has a couple grafted and was going to check. I did give George a seedling as well and he thinks it got planted in Bob Lullfitz's garden at GinGin? Digby at Kings Park says he thinks they has one culture of it but can't guarantee further success. I have to follow up with him to get a DNA profile of it to determine its parentage. I managed to get a whole lot more material for cuttings and give George some material for grafting at the most final visit to the house.

Steve Hopper thought it was a hybrid maybe with *E. preissiana*. but I am not sure about that.

Greg Keighery took some flowers for a pollen examination. His first comment was it could be an old remnant of Eucs gone by.

Hazel Dempster

The pics include some seedlings I grew from the very small amount of seed salvaged, note the grey foliage one and the one with the round leaves compared with the parent ones and as you can see the flowers are quite large about the size of a fist when all in flower. The tree ended up about at least 5 metres tall. But Mum says it was a group of mallees when she found it. Probably the one clone. She noticed it as a mass of pink flowers on this tree in the bush so went to investigate. That was when that area was all still wheatbelt bush.



All above photos, *Eucalyptus* "Pin Pin" (Pingrup Pink).