

GREVILLEA STUDY GROUP

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NEWSLETTER NO. 20

Welcome to the "new look" Grevillea Study Group newsletter with a new format and a new editor. I would like to thank Ken Arnold for his work as editor over the past few years. I hope I can keep up with the good work.

I would welcome any articles you wish to contribute - even just making a note with your subscriptions would be great.

Particularly I would love to receive any information you have on pests and diseases of Grevillea and any updated information on grafting as I wish to feature these topics in the next newsletter.

I would like to keep in touch with the needs of the Grevillea Study Group members, therefore any comments, suggestions or criticisms on the newsletter would be gratefully received.

The theme of this issue is Grevilleas for Colder Climates.

NEWS in BRIEF

Mrs W. Bristow of Sherwood, Queensland wanted to know if *Grevillea whiteana* (formerly "Coochin Hills") was named after C.T.White, the former Queensland Government Botanist.

The answer is yes. It was named after C.T.White (1890-1950) who was Queensland Government Botanist from 1918-1950

Malcolm Hunt of Dubbo writes that the Forestry Commission Nursery at Dubbo has two Grevilleas in the Bicentenary pack of rare and endangered plants - *G. shirensii* and *G. dryandri*. It is good to see the Forestry Commission promoting the cultivation of these plants.

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ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY JULY 31st

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS in SYDNEY at 12.30 p.m. to look at Grevilleas from New Caledonia and to look at other grafted rare species. Meet outside bookshop at the Visitors' Centre.

SATURDAY AUGUST 20th

A field trip to the Braidwood area, which is home to several Grevilleas plus a host of other plants of interest. Meet at the Tourist Centre at Bomaderry at 9.30 a.m., on the highway, north of Nowra. If attending, please phone Ray (042) 84 9216.

DON'T FORGET

SEPTEMBER 16th, 17th and 18th

We are putting on a large display at the Spring Wildflower Spectacular to be held at Condell Park Basketball Arena, Bankstown. If you can help in any way, please phone Peter (02) 543 2242.

SEPTEMBER 24th and 25th

The Grevillea Study Group is putting on a display of Grevilleas at the Herbarium, Sydney Royal Botanic Gardens, as part of an open weekend the Herbarium is holding. There will be other displays, including one by the Prostanthera Study Group. If anyone can help Ray with this display, please phone him (042) 84 9216.

REPORTS ON ACTIVITIES

STUDY GROUP WEEKEND - TALLANGATTA NOVEMBER 1987

by David Shiells

We arrived at the Caravan Park on the Friday night, beating the Evans (Ian and Lynn) from Bendigo by 10 minutes and meeting up with John & Ewena Gallagher and Frank & Joyce Berner from Melbourne who had already set up camp. Seeing no one else was expected until Saturday night we decided on an early start next morning to the Upper Murray to locations suggested by Don Weybury.

The trip went to plan and arriving where we expected to find *Grevillea polybractea* meant we were not lost. Enquiry was made at the farmhouse and as luck would have it, the owner was Connie Carlyle, daughter of Leo Hodge (Poorinda hybrids - fame). Yes the *G. polybractea* were at the back of her property, we were welcome to go through.

These *G. polybractea* were different to those I had seen before, growing to a height of less than 1 metre. It appeared to be a pure stand with very little variance and flowers of a good deep colour.

Continuing on, we lunched on the banks of the Murray where the water was so clear you could see the bottom; and a fisherman's paradise as was shown by a young fisherman who displayed his catch of Brown and Rainbow trout.

In this area we found *G. lanigera* and *G. rosmarinifolia* common to the area (a walk to the top of a hill for a view proved two young men are not as fit as they thought).

Although there was some rough going ahead, the thought of finding *G. alpina* was enough to spur us on ?? (or me at least). Unfortunately, we did not find it - Don Weybury assured me we did not go far enough.

Returning home rather tired, a Counter meal and get together at the Local topped the day off.

Next day with our ranks swelled by the arrival of Peter Harradence, we journeyed to Albury and the Nail Can Range. Here the *G. alpina* looked magnificent growing to a height of 1 metre and with colour variation from lemon, yellow, orange, bright orange and rarely red. Our next stop was Mt. Granya for lunch but as a sidelight we stopped to have a look at the Ettamogorah Pub.

Mt. Granya is a very interesting spot, unfortunately by November, the main flush of flowering had finished. The *G. polybractea* reach 2 metres plus in height and with natural hybridization with *G. lanigera*, many variations in both flower colour, habit and foliage occur. Some of the grey foliage hybrids are particularly attractive and Ian "Hawkeye" Evans found a yellow *G. x polybractea*. An area further on which had been burnt had *G. lanigera* suckers shooting en masse.

Returning to camp, our ranks had been swelled again by the arrival of Ray Kerr and our illustrious and much travelled leader Peter who was returning home from Neil Marriott's.

That night after a barbecue, slides were shown of Peter's trip to Western Australia. Amongst other members' slides, one which brought forth a lot of comment was that of the Gallagher's garden in the Dandenongs, covered in snow.

Monday we were to travel through Mt. Burrowa National Park and on to Mt. Pine; but a slight?? diversion to look for a form of *G. willissii* specimens, which were collected 20 years ago, yielded no luck. In Mt. Burrowa - Mt. Pine, *G. jephcottii*, *G. lanigera* and *G. ramossissima* were found. On the Murray Valley was a pure stand of *G. polybractea* shooting up everywhere after a fire possibly 2 years before.

Tuesday was the time to head home but the weekend was not over yet. A quick trip in to Chiltern Forest to see the prostrate suckering *G. alpina* then on to the Warby

Ranges to see the *G. alpina* form where both the normal red/yellow and lemon variants were seen. A garden visit to Jill Rossiter's garden high in the Warby Range climaxed our weekend. A plant there that attracted a lot of discussion was *G. annulifera* about which, on the Sunday night Peter had passed the remark "This was one plant that was difficult to cultivate". Unfortunately, Peter was heading to Sydney as we gazed on this fine specimen.

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In search of *G. johnsonii* in the Rylestone area

MAY 1988

by Christine Guthrie

At 6.30 a.m., Peter Olde, Ray Brown, Tony Henderson and I set off for Rylestone with a couple of brief stops on the way. The first was just past Lithgow to look at *G. juniperina* growing in the road verges, showing interesting variations in the size of its leaf. The second stop was made in Clandulla State Forest area near Kandos where we saw *G. obtusiflora* ssp. *obtusiflora* which was suckering after fire along with an undescribed species of Persoonia.

On arrival at Rylestone, we met Sam Jack and Evan Weatherhead from the Blue Mountains. We headed north along the Bylong Road to Lee's Pinch, a really interesting area which has been recently incorporated in Goulburn River National Park. We didn't find *G. johnsonii* here, but we did find a very diverse flora including a small leaf form of *G. sericea* and *G. ramosissima* growing on the rocky slopes along with a Persoonia which has a very attractive twisted foliage.

Murrumbo Gap was our next stop, and after a hastily eaten lunch, we searched all over, even up east-facing moist gullies, but to no avail. We did find *G. mucronulata* and *G. triaternata* and a large dingo lair in amongst the huge rocks at the top of the mountain.

Still hopeful of finding the elusive *G. johnsonii*, we headed towards Cox's Gap. We stopped at Cox's Gap tunnel where the railway line is cut though the hillside. After clambering up the rocky slopes around and above the tunnel, we finally found our first *G. johnsonii* - unfortunately it was a dead one, killed by a recent fire which seemed to have wiped out quite a few of the population.

We finally found a live *G. johnsonii* growing at the base of a cliff in granite soil facing west, not quite the east-facing moist gully we had been looking for. Peter assured us that *G. johnsonii* is often found at the base of cliffs - obviously their roots are finding the moisture that runs off the rocks. These west-facing specimens were very straggly, not the lush plants that I would have expected to find in a moist gully or that you would see in cultivation. The next surprise was a burnt plant which was root-suckering - *G. johnsonii* is reported to be killed by fire.

As time was against us, we decided not to go any further. On the way home, we diverted towards Glen Davis. we had a location for *G. johnsonii* 20 km north-east of Capertee, which we figured was somewhere on the road to Glen Davis. Unfortunately we did not find it, but Glen Davis at dusk is truly a site to behold, with magnificent sandstone cliffs rising up around this somewhat deserted town.

We had a wonderful day - thanks to Peter for organising it. I was left with a desire to explore this area much more fully in the future.

It is interesting to note that *G. johnsonii* grows in areas that receive some winter snow. It is therefore suitable for cultivation in colder areas - it grows very well in Victoria.

THE GREVILLEA PARK

Further to the information of the Grevillea Park featured in our last newsletter, is the good news that the lease was to be signed on July 15th, with work commencing soon after.

Ray has been very pleased with the response from the Grevillea Study Group, with some of our members joining up, and a donation of \$500.00 from one member. This sort of support is invaluable not only financially, but morally as well.

An application has been made to the N.S.W. Region of the Society for Growing Australian Plants for a donation of \$5,000.00 for the project. Let's hope they decide to support this worthwhile cause. However, Ray does wish to express his disappointment that the N.S.W. Region did not support Peter Olde's proposal for donations to the Study Groups. As curator of the living collection in Bulli, Ray feels that the money could have been put towards payment of freight costs incurred obtaining cuttings for the collection.

The next meeting of the Grevillea Park Society is Thursday July 28th, at 7.30 p.m. at Ray's home, 29 Gwythir Avenue, Bulli.

Please note that the address for The Illawarra Grevillea Park Society Inc. was incorrect in the last newsletter. It is NOT 20, it is 29 Gwythir Avenue, Bulli 2516.



IN THE WILD

Grevillea obtusiflora

One N.S.W. species which is poorly known by most Grevillea fanciers is *Grevillea obtusiflora* which has now been divided into three subspecies, *ssp. obtusiflora*, *ssp. kedumbensis* and *ssp. granulifera*. *G. obtusiflora* should not be confused with the well-known plant from Western Australia, *G. obtusifolia* which is now regarded as a subspecies of *G. thelemanniana*.

In my own mind there was confusion between this species and *G. arenaria* to which it is closely related but has some botanically distinctive features. The most obvious difference between the two species is the shape of the limb. In both subspecies of *G. arenaria*, *ssp. arenaria* and *ssp. montana*, the limb is distinctly drawn out to a tapering point, whereas in *G. obtusiflora* it is rounded and obtuse.

The perianth limb is the apex of the perianth, which is often curled over and nestled against the perianth. It contains the anthers attached to the inside of each of the tepal ends.

Each of the subspecies of *G. obtusiflora* is quite distinct in its habit and flower colour and should do reasonably well in cultivation, when they become better known.

G. obtusiflora *ssp. obtusiflora* is a small, root-suckering shrub which has bright pink and white flowers over a long period. Surprisingly, it was collected and described in the early 19th Century and its distribution may have been more widespread in those days. Nowadays, I only know it from the Clandulla State Forest near Kandos where it grows in small patches beneath the forest canopy. Its flowering is rarely profuse and it is a relatively inconspicuous component of the forest shrub layer. It only grows to c. 30cm and plants can sometimes be seen in a straight line, shooting from a root below the soil.

G. obtusiflora *ssp. kedumbensis* is a surprisingly attractive plant which has not been cultivated to my knowledge. The species is found in the Kedumba Valley of the Blue Mountains and was completely unknown to me until recently. It is a low, much-branched shrub 50-80 cm tall, with pale yellow to cream flowers, perhaps with a touch of pink or red. Growing so close to Sydney, it is a wonder that more people have not come upon this species and sought to have it identified. Flowering is quite profuse and the species should tolerate quite cold conditions.

G. obtusiflora *ssp. granulifera* is a more erect, robust shrub, similar to the common *G. arenaria* *ssp. arenaria* found on the south coast of N.S.W.. I first located this species around the rim of the steep gorge above the Chandler River at Wollombi Falls. It is a dense, spreading shrub 1-2 m. high, 1-2 m. wide and grows in very shaly soils. Flowers are a purplish-red-brown and green with a burgundy style. It too grows in a very cold climate and should do well in similar climates.

PROPAGATION

Our seed bank officer, Phil Congdon, has recently moved to the Newcastle area and has been busy building himself a humpy on his new property.

Phil assures me that he will have an updated seed list for the October newsletter. If you can't wait until then, Phil's new address is c/- Owens Road, Martinsville, 2265, Phone (049) 48 8576 during office hours.

Phil has opened a native plant nursery at 45 Pacific Highway, Bennett's Green, 2290, and would welcome any visitors if you are in the south Newcastle area.

SOME SUCCESS with N.T. Grevillea

Betty Rymer of Kenthurst, Sydney, reports some success with seed collected in Darwin in July 1986, including *G. angulata*, *G. refracta*, *G. dryandri* and *G. formosa*. These plants are all now in 25 cm pots and kept in a glasshouse above 17°C for the winter.

All seeds were sown in Martin's potting mix on capillary beds in a greenhouse. During January 1987, there were 2 very hot days and the air temperature in the greenhouse was 50°C and 52°C. The soil temperature in the seed pots was not known. Three days later 6 *G. formosa* seeds germinated.

Perhaps if you are having trouble germinating tropical Grevilleas, a bit of heat may help!

PROPAGATION MADE EASY!

Peter Harradence of Upper Beaconsfield, Victoria, reports having his best ever success in striking Grevillea using a very simple method.

Peter received quite a few species from David Shiells, including many forms of *G. alpina*, *G. infundibularis*, *G. hookeriana* and *G. drummondii*.

The pots of cuttings were placed in polystyrene foam boxes which were left in the open on the east side of the house where they received some morning sun. This method was probably successful as a very mild summer was experienced with only a couple of hot north wind days. This uncovered process was less reliable in the cold, wet winter.

It just shows that you don't need to have a sophisticated system to be able to propagate successfully.

THE CUTTING EXCHANGE

While our Grevillea Study Group collection is still in pots at Bulli, there is not sufficient cutting material available to supply large amounts for the cutting exchange.

Are there any members who have large numbers of Grevilleas in the ground who would be willing to supply cuttings for the coming year? If so, please send a list to the editor for publication.

We should be able to supply cuttings from our Bulli collection within a year, if all goes well, as it will be planted into the Grevillea Park.



IN YOUR GARDEN

GREVILLEAS FOR COLD CLIMATES

Included in this article is information on Grevilleas grown in New Zealand, England, Mittagong, Tasmania and Victoria. You can't get areas much colder than these!

GREVILLEAS IN NEW ZEALAND

Merv Holland writes that Grevilleas have been grown in New Zealand for many years, with *G. rosmarinifolia* appearing to be the most easily established species, setting seed quite readily. Most Australian species growing South of Queensland will grow in the north island, with its warmer climate and suitable soils. Many will grow as far down as Christchurch where winter frosts go as low as -10°C.

The first plantings in the Christchurch Botanic Gardens were about 1959, and in the intervening years about 60 species and hybrids have been tried, with about 30 there to see at present. Merv makes the somewhat surprising observation that species appear to survive better than hybrids (with the exception of the Poorindas).

Some of the most successful include *G. alpina*, *G. fasciculata*, *G. glabrata*, *G. juniperina*, *G. lavandulacea* and *G. thelymanniana*.

He also remarks on the hardiness of Grevillea cuttings - a collection of 50 varieties obtained in late November from Peter Olde's garden took seven days to freight, clear customs and agriculture checks etc - and still look like achieving a 100% strike!

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GREVILLEAS IN ENGLAND

by Tony Titchen

Once again good old *G. rosmarinifolia* is grown successfully in U.K. *G. "sulphurea"* (the yellow form of *G. juniperina*) also appears to be very hardy in their harsh (to us) climate.

The following species have been grown or are growing at Wakehurst Place (part of Kew Gardens)

- *G. acanthifolia* (ssp. *acanthifolia*)
- *G. alpina*
- *G. juniperina* var *sulphurea*
- *G. rosmarinifolia*
- *G. rosmarinifolia* x *juniperina* ("Canberra Gem")

G. robusta can also be grown as a greenhouse and bedding (summer) plant, and Tony is interested in grafting onto it. He is also obtaining seed of other species to try. Experience has shown that about -5°C of frost can be tolerated quite well by the plants that will grow in the U.K.

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GREVILLEAS IN TASMANIA

by Mary McEvoy

Grevilleas are a widely grown and popular species in Tasmania and are generally suited to well drained situations flowering better in full sun and cope with dry areas. Only *G. australis* in various forms grows naturally in Tasmania.

Bass Strait limits the avenues of access and difficulties of propagation restricts some worthwhile Grevilleas to a few growers.

Finding the right conditions is a challenge when trialling new Grevilleas when one is unable to learn the specific conditions in which the plants grow naturally. It is often assumed that plants originating from Western Australia need sand or light loam for best results, but with Grevilleas in particular this is not so. *G. drummondii* for example does not succeed in light soil.

Although not particularly applicable to Grevilleas, plants which are listed in such publications as "Grow What Where" as growing in wet conditions often will not do so in Tasmania, and I suspect this has something to do with soil temperatures. Often plants listed for shade will do better in sun and flowering times differed to those listed for elsewhere in Australia.

Tasmania does not have a humidity problem and has similar rainfall pattern to South-Western Australia, and although temperatures are considerably lower and sunnier shorter, a surprising number of species from there can be grown. In fact, in parts of this state, dryness is often a problem with West Australian species.

Tasmania is a small island state but has a wide variation in rainfall, frost and temperature between say the east and west coast and inland areas. Enthusiast native plant growers are continually trialling new species often with happy results.

Disease is rarely a problem with Grevillea in Tasmania - very rarely does the grey mould, botrytis, occur.

THE BEST GREVILLEAS FOR TASMANIA CONDITIONS

The criteria I have chosen in deciding on a list of the best Grevilleas for Tasmanian conditions are:-

1. Length of life - at least over 5 years
2. Long flowering
3. Attractive and fresh looking shrub
4. Resistant to disease (practically all Grevilleas)

From my experience and observation, these would be:-

- G. acanthifolia* copes with poor drainage and very heavy soils. Flowers freely Oct-Dec not so long flowering.
G. aquifolium upright form flowering May to February and growing in difficult soils.
G. asplenifolia not well known but grows in well drained and heavy soils and flowers June-Feb.
G. juniperina grows in well drained and poorly drained soils and flowers June-March.
The *G. juniperina* hybrid, *G. "Pink Lady"* grows well here.
G. lavandulacea grows in a wide range of soils and flowers brightly and prolifically April-Dec.
G. linearifolia not such a bright flowerer, but hardy and usually reliable.
G. victoriae A.C.T. form hardy but not flowering as long as the usual form but not susceptible to disease and attractive in flower.
G. rosmarinifolia cream form. Hardy and free flowering June-Oct.
G. tetragonoloba appears to have great potential though perhaps not grown for long enough. Free flowerer.

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GREVILLEAS IN MITTAGONG

Dr Marsh of Mittagong, in the Southern Highlands of N.S.W., supplied information on Grevilleas growing in his garden. His home on Mt Gibraltar, between Mittagong and Bowral, would receive numerous frosts and the occasional snowfall during winter.

GREVILLEAS IN SOUTHERN VICTORIA

by Neil Marriott, White Gums Nursery

At our property at Wandin in the hills to the east of Melbourne, we have been growing and trialling a large range of Grevillea species over the last 20 years. The area has cold, wet winters (average annual rainfall 1000-1280 mm), regular though not severe frosts and can have heavy cloud cover often for weeks at a time.

Soil is heavy, yellow clay, but due to the slope of the property, drainage is good. A shallow gully runs down the centre of the property and this becomes quite wet in winter. It flows into a permanent creek which is lined extensively with fern species, Gahnias, *Prostanthera lasianthos* and other shade and moisture-loving plants. These two areas have increased the range of species we can grow. In particular, *G. barklyana ssp. barklyana* has seeded extensively to produce a grove of superb large and spreading trees.

As new Grevillea species became available, they were planted out in beds, mounds or other variously prepared sites according to what was known of their natural habitat.

G. acanthifolia (T)
G. alpina (T, NSW)
G. aquifolium (T)
G. arenaria (T)
G. aspleniifolia (T)
G. australis (T)
G. barklyana ssp. *barklyana* (T)
G. baueri ssp. *baueri* (T, NSW)
G. bedgoodiana
G. bipinnatifida (T)
G. confertifolia (T)
G. curviloba (T)
G. depouperata

G. diffusa ssp. *diffusa*
G. diffusa ssp. *evansiana* (NSW)
G. diffusa ssp. *filipendula*
G. diminuta (T)
G. diversifolia (T)
G. floripendula
G. infecunda
G. jephcottii (T)
G. johnsonii (T)
G. juniperina (T, NSW)
G. lanigera (T, NSW)
G. lauiroflia (T)
G. lineraifolia (T)
G. longifolia (T)

In this way, a "sandplain garden", a "rainforest" garden, a "Western Australian Grevillea" garden, a "Victorian Grevillea" and many more were created to suit the needs of their occupants!!

Many plants grew beyond our wildest expectations, even beyond the recorded maximum sizes in a number of cases. However, many Grevilleas grew well for only a few years before succumbing, usually to a particularly cold and wet winter. Others gave up after several months.

From all these plantings and numerous re-plantings, the following list is made of the species which have proven themselves to be hardy over many years. I believe that as particular attention was paid to drainage, soil structure etc., the majority of fatalities were due to the effects of climate on the plants. In particular, this is related to the cold, wet and cloudy winters, although the hot, dry summers could have affected some species.

The list of Grevilleas below are those hardy to cold, wet winters in Victoria. Those Grevilleas that are hardy in Tasmania (T) and Mittagong, Southern Highlands (NSW) are also indicated.

G. microstegia (T)
G. molyneuxii
G. montis cole (T)
G. mucronulata (NSW)
G. patentiloba
G. pilulifera
G. repens
G. rivularis (T, NSW)
G. rosmarinifolia (T)
G. sericea (T)
G. shirensis
G. singuliflora
G. speciosa ssp. *speciosa*
G. speciosa ssp. *dimorpha* (NSW)
G. speciosa ssp. *oleoides*
G. steiglitziana (T, NSW)
G. thelemanniana ssp. *thelemanniana* (T)
G. thelemanniana ssp. *obtusifolia*
G. thelemanniana ssp. *pinaster* (T)
G. thelemanniana ssp. *preissii*
G. trifida
G. tripartita
G. umbellulata
G. victoriae (T)
G. willisii
G. wilsonii

OFFICE BEARERS

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Cuttings Exchange: Hessel Saunders, Box 31, P.O. Bulli 2516.

FINANCIAL REPORT

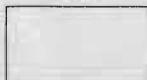
JULY 1988

Income
Subscriptions \$378.63

Expenditure
Newsletter Expenses 164.07
Stationery 3.70
Tubestock for Bulli Collection 85.00
\$252.77
Balance on Hand 14.7.88 \$1,033.75

If a cross appears in the box, your subscription of \$5.00 is due. Please send to the Treasurer, Christine Guthrie, 32 Blanche Street, Oatley 2223. Please make all cheques payable to the Grevillea Study Group.

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