

HILBERTIA STUDY GROUP

NEWSLETTER No. 2

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Due to various factors such as being away from home during January and February, the drought we experienced during the earlier months of the year, and Cyclone Alby I am afraid my efforts of growing and propagation of Hibbertias have not progressed as favourably as one would have hoped. With the coming of spring and more suitable cutting material of several species becoming available hopefully can make better progress in the coming months of both growing and reporting of efforts to members. Enclosed is a form which I hope will provide members with an incentive to fill in and report on propagation so as to compile information which will be of help to the Study group.

Hibbertias of which there are approximately 130 species in Australia, belong to the Dilleniaceae Family. Hibbertias were named after George Hibbert who was a London Patron of Botany.

Though we have 130 species very few are seen in cultivation. *H. Scandens* from Queensland and New South Wales is possibly the best known, and from all accounts seems to grow successfully over a wide area throughout Australia. This plant grows particularly well in Perth, can be used as both a creeper or ground cover, the two plants I have are seldom without a flower throughout the year. *H. Procumbens* and *H. Obstusifolia* are another two from the Eastern States which are available in Perth, as yet I have had these only a short time and so cannot report progress on their performance. I believe *H. Procumbens* is a slow grower -- any comment from Eastern States members would be grateful.

With approximately 63 species in Western Australia one would think that we would have numerous Hibbertias available in cultivation, that is not the case with *H. Cuneiformis* being the only one I have seen in small numbers in one or two of the Nurseries here, at odd times.

At the present time Hibbertias are displaying their colour over a large area of the South West. The most prominent appears to be *H. Hypericoides* which is found over a large area of the South West and flowers profusely for 4 to 5 months. Plants vary in size and shape generally being rather open and approximately 60cm in height. *H. Hypericoides* appears to be very hardy and fire resistant, and after a fire numerous shoots appear, Mrs H. Dempster of Manjimup has had success striking these shoots. I have tried seed (difficult to obtain) and cuttings but had no success with either.

I have tried several other Hibbertias from seed but results to date have been very poor, Dr R.D. Hoogland from Research School of Biological Sciences in Canberra informs me he has had some similar results. *H. Stellaris*, *H. Vaginata*, *H. Quadricolour* and *H. Montana* provide large amounts of seed but I suspect a large percentage is sterile, also insects eat the seed, this is possibly why germination is so poor.

H. Stellaris, *H. Cuneiformis* and *H. Scandens* are three that strike readily from cutting, I generally use coarse sand and Peat Moss at 3 to 1 and find the best time is September to December.

I have a small amount of cuttings available from *H. Stellaris* and hope to obtain cuttings from *H. Cuneiformis*, any member willing to try cuttings could let me know and I will forward them when available, I would be grateful if they could let me know so as distribution can be arranged.