



# Isopogons & Petrophiles

*The Australian Native Plant Society's Isopogon & Petrophile Study Group Newsletter*



*Petrophile glauca*, Kulin, WA September 2005.  
(See page 3 for more information about this species.)

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## EDITORIAL

Hello and welcome to Newsletter 15. I can't believe it is 2010 already. (Not sure yet whether it is "2 thousand and ten" or "twenty ten". I suspect the latter will win in the end.)

After some 4 years, a month in Melbourne has had above average rain and did it come down. It was a pleasure to see over 70mm in the month of September and it continued into October. I was even able to forgive the leaking roof! In fact we have been drip fed so to speak over the months since. Although Jan was not wet we did have 1000% more rain in the first 2 days than in the first 2 months of 2009! And the plants have loved it. Everything has perked up and many individuals have flowered for the first time.

You may have been following the saga of my seed grown *Isopogon divergens*, collected from a single white flowered plant (in a field of the regular pink form) near Kalbarri. I have been anxiously waiting to see if it stayed true to the form of its parent. Each year for the last few it has budded up and then aborted the bud in the dry. This year it finally flowered for me and is indeed white. As you can see from the photo, the flower tips have a pink tinge and are most attractive. I have managed to strike it from



*Isopogon divergens*- white flowered form.

cuttings and so fingers crossed this unique variety will survive. It is this sort of collecting and propagating that underlies the importance of ANPS and its study groups.

Another great joy for me was the first time flowering of *Isopogon fletcheri* (see newsletter 4

pg 5 for more info on this taxon). I was given a specimen of this very rare plant by my father, when I started the study group in 2001. It has grown well for me but not flowered until this year. The plant is in fairly heavy soil in full sun, somewhat different to its natural habitat, on cool sandstone ledges in the Upper Blue Mountains of NSW. The flowers are pure white and the buds have a lovely patterned appearance. It is an attractive and unusual variety.



*Isopogon fletcheri*

I also had good displays from *Isopogon ceratophyllus*, *Petrophile longifolia*, *Petrophile media*, *Isopogon mnoraifolius* and *Isopogon formosus*.

The highlight for me of the last few months was the ASGAP meeting in Geelong. The organisers had produced an amazing event and should be heartily congratulated. The lectures were entertaining and informative and the day trips really showcased some of our excellent Victorian flora, as well as, of course, the RBG Cranbourne's Australian Garden. It was great to catch up with old friends and new and to see some of the study group members again.

This issue's species is *Petrophile glauca*, a relatively newly described shrub from WA. Please keep your letters, emails and reports coming in as they are what keeps the study group going.

All the best.

David Lightfoot ☺

PETROPHILE GLAUCA FOREMAN

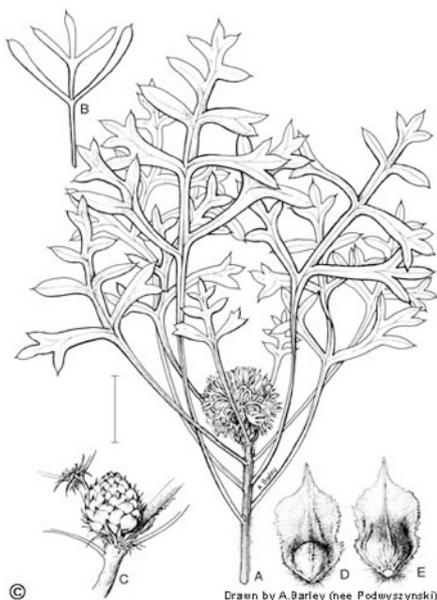
*Petrophile glauca* is a relatively newly described species of *Petrophile* from WA. It was first recognised in 1995 and was formally published in the *Flora of Australia* Vol. 16 by the late Donald Foreman. Despite this, it is a fairly widespread and



locally common species found from Corrigin and Wagin in the west to Lake King and East Mt Barren in the east. In the past it has been mistakenly known as *Petrophile trifida*, a taxonomic name not currently recognised.

As with many of the *Petrophiles* this taxon is a low to medium shrub being up to a metre to 1.5m in height and width. In a sunny position it naturally has a compact bushy habit.

The branches which tend to grow horizontally before ascending are usually glabrous, although they are hairy when young.



The scale shows 2 cm A-C, 5mm D & E

The leaves are an attractive part of the plant. They are glaucous (grey-blue green) in colour and give the taxon its specific name. Young leaves can be bright red and make an impressive display during growth periods. They are 7 to 20cm long, flattened and pinnate. The segments are up to 2.5cm long

and are variable. The leaf tips are pungent (so watch out when grabbing seed and cuttings).

The majority of the flowers appear from August to November, but the odd flowerhead can still be found through to January. Individual flowers are white to creamy yellow, up to 14mm long, with a 2mm yellow pollen presenter. They are grouped in globular sessile inflorescences that are held terminally or in the branch axils. They are about 2cm in diameter, often profuse, and make a great display.

After flowering the woody cones develop. They are 1.5cm across and are globular to ovoid. Inside the cones will be a variable number of winged nuts up to 6mm in size.



In the wild *P. glauca* grows in heathy shrublands, open woodlands or low sclerophyll scrub over laterite, gravel or sand.

It is not well known in cultivation but is growing well at the RBG Cranbourne in Victoria, where it is in full sun over deep sand. It is likely to prefer full sun but will grow in semishade. Well drained soils are a must. It is said to be moderately frost tolerant and able to withstand dry periods.

Seed or cuttings should do well, and this species would make a great addition to a larger garden or rockery.



(Map and drawing reproduced from *Flora of Australia* Vol. 16 with permission of ABRIS.)

## MEMBERS' LETTERS AND EMAILS

From Bob O'Neill, Wandin Vic

July 2009

Our *Isopogons* & *Petrophiles* are going quite well. We grow/propagate only from cuttings, and generally get good results from the range of species we grow. Even so, I would always seek a wider range, so if anyone had plants or cutting material available, I would be eager to snap it up. We use bottom heat, so do get cuttings struck year round; even so results are faster and better in the warmer months.

Over the past few years our rainfall has moved from 900mm+ to 720-850mm. I feel that this has enhanced our conditions' suitability for such plants as *Isopogons* and *Verticordias*. We seem to have the advantages of a northerly aspect and red soils, which makes the job all that much easier.

*If anyone has material they would like to give to or swap with Bob, please let me know and I will put you in touch. Ed*

From Graeme Downe, Endeavour Hills, Vic. Oct 2009

Dear David, Recently returned from a 3 day bushwalk through the Budawangs in NSW, where there were spectacular isopogons (many 1.5 m high) in flower- *Isopogon anemonifolius*. *Isopogon anethifolius* & ? a few *Isopogon prostratus*. The age of some of the *Isopogons* was well in excess of 20 yrs.



*Isopogon anethifolius* & *Petrophile sessilis*,  
Budawangs NSW

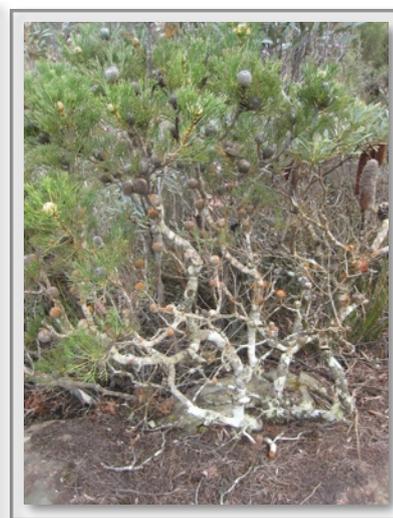
At home my grafted *Isopogon latifolius* has put on a great show & my 3 *Isopogon baxteri* seedlings continue to grow slowly. Also have 1 flower on *I. sphaerocephalus* after I thought it died 2 years ago.

*Hi Graeme, Thanks for the pics. I like how the one with Isopogon anethifolius also has Petrophile sessilis. Sounds*

*like a nice trip. I am envious of the I. latifolius. No flowers on mine this year but lots of new growth so maybe next year? Ed*



*Isopogon anemonifolius*,  
Budawangs NSW



*Isopogon anethifolius*,  
Budawangs NSW

From Margaret Pieroni, Denmark, WA  
Oct 2009

*This letter follows on from Margaret's correspondence in Issue 14, page 9.*

My *P. longifolia* flowers have opened at last and I have been able to compare the pollen presenters with those of the one I photographed at Quaalup. They are the same. So, the mound plants at Crapella Rd. and in my garden are all *P. longifolia* after all.

That leaves the sprawling plants that I've seen at Mt. Barker. I haven't looked at the pollen presenters of those.



*Petrophile longifolia*,  
In cultivation Denmark.

I've lost a few of my plants. The drainage isn't good where I've planted them and we've had over 1000 mm of rain this year. Spring has arrived suddenly only last week.



*Isopogon* sp., SE of Frankland.

I saw a large shrub (*Isopogon*) on Parson's Rd, south east of Frankland last week that I haven't identified yet. It looks like *I. divergens* but the colour is a much richer pink. There was only one plant. Are you able to identify it?



Close up of the mystery *Isopogon*

Thanks for the photos, Margaret. I agree that the "new" *Isopogon* is difficult to pick. I would have guessed at *Isopogon divergens* from the habit shot, but in the close up the leaves do not look quite right. I agree also that the colour is deeper than the usual *I. divergens*. The other possibility is *I. scabriusculus*. There are a few subspecies of that one. Both of those taxa are found in that area. It really doesn't match any of the others, but of course could be a new species. Ed

From Paul Kennedy Strathmerton, Vic  
Nov 2009

Hi David. I hope the weather down in Melbourne is nowhere as bad as here. We could do with four inches of rain right now. Here is an

update on how our *Isopogons* and *Petrophiles* are progressing.

The terrible heat of the 2008/2009 summer did not abate until the beginning of May. Since then we have had 200mm of rain mostly from showery weather which means there has been no general soaking rains. The plants in the heavier soils seem to be coping better than those on the deep sand. The sub soil moisture in the sand hill is now gone and even mature trees are dying. The second week of November was a real heat wave with temperatures each day around 38 degrees C. If this hot weather continues through summer without any decent rainfall, I ponder what our garden will look like in April 2010. Nevertheless, we battle on giving the smaller plants that need some moisture a watering from the hose. With drought and so much heat we have tried to give new plants much more shade to avoid scorching of leaves from direct sun radiation.

Only *Isopogon latifolius* died from that scorching day in February 2009. I have planted another one in a semi shaded position but so far it has not shown much growth.

*Isopogon cuneatus* is in a semi shaded position and is about 500mm high and flowers sparingly.

*Isopogon formosus* has sat out the heat under the shade of lemon scented gum and has flowered for the past seven years.



*Isopogon sphaerocephalus*

*Isopogon sphaerocephalus* struggles putting on a little growth each year which is cut back by cold weather in winter. It is in sandy loam with a hessian cover over it all the year.

*Isopogon dawsonii* has grown very well in full sun on sandy loam. Now over 1.2m high, it has just

finished flowering. I am surprised that it has done so well in an open position.

*Isopogon cerataphyllus*. In a similar position to *Isopogon dansonii* and has shown resistance to extreme heat despite being a coastal plant usually in open forest and a much higher rainfall.

*Isopogon polycephalus*. Another one that has defied the extreme conditions, now 1.3m high and flowers very well.



*Petrophile megalostegia*

*Petrophile ericifolia* is in an open position in sandy loam. A low shrubby plant, it seems to adapt to a whole range of soils and climates. I have seen this plant in an Armidale garden in NSW where the soils are much heavier and frosts can be



*Petrophile seminuda*

down to minus 10 degrees C. It flowers well each year.

*Petrophile seminuda* has grown slowly with a hessian cover over it. A plant from the higher rainfall areas, it needs some help to survive.

*Petrophile media* has grown slowly but not flowered yet.

*Petrophile megalostegia* is struggling, but so far has refused to die. Perhaps in better years it may do quite well being from north east of Perth.



*Petrophile biloba*

*Petrophile biloba* has grown very well in full sun on loamy soils. It flowered profusely this year.

*Petrophile glauca* is well over ten years old in sandy loam. It flowers quite well but in the cooler months it allows its leaves to die right back and then comes with a new flush in spring. Other *Petrophiles* do not seem to do this.

*Petrophile seminuda* grows in the shade of *Hakea bookeriana* and so far has survived our hot summers. Still only 300mm high but looking healthy.

I hope this report is of a help to your research.

*Thanks very much for the update Paul. In Melbourne, we had a large temperature drop with about 40mm of rain in the days after you sent the report. I hope you experienced some of that amazing rain. Ed*

## Membership

Current Members of the study group are:

### Individual

Lynne Bilston, Ashfield, NSW  
 Barbara Buchanan, Myrree, Vic  
 Murray Fagg, Canberra, ACT  
 Cas Liber, St Pauls, NSW  
 Paddy Lightfoot, New Lambton, NSW  
 Bob O'Neill, Wandin North, Vic  
 Margaret Pieroni, Denmark, WA  
 John Wrigley, Coffs Harbour, NSW  
 Maryanne and Ashley Kopania, Macleod, Vic  
 Tony Cavanagh, Ocean Grove, Vic  
 Marina Tyndale-Biscoe, Braidwood, NSW  
 Lloyd Carman, Eden Hills, SA  
 Peter Olde, Illawong, NSW  
 Graeme Downe, Endeavour Hills, Vic  
 Patricia Lightfoot, Taringa, Qld  
 Don & Joy Williams, Badgingarra, WA  
 Paul and Barbara Kennedy, Strathmerton, Vic  
 Betty Denton, Eltham, Vic  
 Phil Trickett & Catriona Bate, Belconnen, ACT  
 Jan & Julie Aamodt, Clare, SA  
 John Nevin, Armidale, NSW  
 Rodger Elliot, Heathmont, Vic  
 Ross & Elaine Sutherland, Shepparton, Vic  
 Ken Arthur & Gwen Bakker, Tower Hill, Vic  
 Kevin Sparrow, Warrnambool, Vic  
 Ian Cox, Kenthurst, NSW  
 Marlee Petrie, Glen Waverley, Vic  
 Jennifer Towell, Mullengandra, NSW  
 John Mahoney, Mt Duneed, Vic  
 Robin McKeown, Watson, ACT  
 Ray Purches, Wangaratta, Vic  
 Fiona McCallum, Greta West, Vic  
 Graeme and Denise Krake, Brogo, NSW  
 Phillip & Julia Rose, Armidale, NSW  
 Dan Ossedryver, Dee Why, NSW

### Regional/Federal Groups

ANPS Federal  
 ANPS Canberra Region  
 APS NSW Region  
 SGAP QLD Region  
 APS SA Region  
 APS Tasmania Inc  
 APS Vic  
 WSWA

### District Groups

Warrnambool & District SGAP  
 APS Maroondah Inc  
 APS Blue Mountains Group  
 APS La Trobe Group

### Herbaria/Libraries

National Herbarium of Victoria Library  
 Western Australian Herbarium Library  
 Australian National Botanic Gardens Library

### Balance Sheet, Financial Year 2008-2009

|                              |          |
|------------------------------|----------|
| Balance brought forward      | \$720.69 |
| Deposits                     |          |
| Membership subscriptions     | \$165.00 |
|                              | \$165.00 |
| Withdrawals                  |          |
| Stationery & stamps          | \$61.30  |
| Printing costs               | \$50.00  |
|                              | \$111.30 |
| Balance at June 30th 2009    | \$774.39 |
| Balance Bendigo Bank account | \$668.99 |
| Cash at hand                 | \$105.40 |
|                              | \$774.39 |

**GLOSSARY**

- Acute-** having a sharp end
- Axil-** the upper angle between a leaf stalk or branch and the stem or trunk from which it is growing
- Glabrous-** without hairs, smooth
- Glaucous-** dull greyish green or blue colour
- Inflorescence-** a group of flowers arranged as a distinct entity
- Laterite-** a reddish clay like mixture of iron and aluminium oxides and hydroxides formed from the weathering of basalt. Ironstone.
- Lobe-** a leaf segment, usually rounded, that is not divided all the way to the midrib.
- Pinnate-** has an appearance like a feather. The description of compound leaves where the leaflets arise from a spine and give this appearance.
- Pungent-** a stiff, sharp point
- Sessile-** borne without a supporting part e.g. directly from a branch without a stem
- Taxa-** (plural of taxon) comes from taxonomy, which is the science of classifying organisms into groups. A taxon is a group of plants sharing a relationship and so are categorised together. It is a unit of taxonomy.
- Terminal-** at the end of a shoot.

**REFERENCES**

- Banksias, Waratahs & Grevilleas and all other plants in the Australian Proteaceae Family* by John W. Wrigley and Murray Fagg
- Flora of Australia Volume 16 Elaeagnaceae, Proteaceae 1.* Melbourne: CSIRO Australia
- Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants suitable for cultivation* by W. Rodger Elliot and David L. Jones

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