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**ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING  
AUSTRALIAN PLANTS**

**MELALEUCA AND ALLIED GENERA STUDY GROUP**  
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**NEWSLETTER NO. 27    December 2003**

Dear Members,

Another year is just about finished. Sometimes I wonder where the years go !! After a dry start we had good rain during February, March, April and May but then it dried up fairly well and we have received only light falls since then except for October when we received 54 mm over 9 rainfall events. ( late note – we had 50mm on Dec 4 & 5 and it appears we may get a bit more ) We had an exceptionally good display of Callistemons this year. Flowering of some species started in July with flowering, in many species, continuing through to the end of October. Our “ Glasshouse “ varieties - “ Gem”, “ Country “, “ Snowball “, “ Dainty Lady “ and “ Pink Sensation “ flowered better this year than they have in previous years but, for some unknown reason, the C. “ Glasshouse Ngun Ngun Red “ failed to flower again this year. This plant is now some 9 – 10 years old and, for the first few years, it flowered well but has not flowered now for about 4 years even though it now gets more sun now than it did previously. Callistemon pearsonii flowered on for a longer period than usual. Callistemon “ Injune “ usually flowers just once per year - at Christmas time - but this year it flowered in October, again in November and is currently budding up again. Callistemon comboynensis usually flowers at the end of the year but it has been flowering for a couple of months this year and is still producing buds. The Melaleuca leucadendra trees, both narrow-leaved and broad-leaved forms, around Brisbane started flowering early this year, They produced four flushes of flowering and occasional trees, particularly the narrow-leaved forms, are still flowering quite well.

The list below is of the Callistemons, Melaleuca, Kunzea and Leptospermum which were in flower in our garden in September 2003 :

**Callistemon pachyphyllus** ( green and pink forms ), C. “ Glasshouse Gem “, C. “ Glasshouse Country “, C. Glasshouse Snowball “, C. “ Glasshouse Beauty “, C. “ Pink Sensation “, C. viminalis, C. “ Rose Opal “, C. “ Howies Fireglow “, C. “ viminalis Pink “, “ C. Captain Cook Pink “, . C. “ Mr Foster “, C. “ Adina “, C. pearsonii, C. “

Eldorado “ , C. Eureka “ ( now deceased following high winds ) , C. “ Little John “ , **Melaleuca pallescens**, **Kunzea callida** , **Leptospermum polygalifolium** , L. “ Aussie Blossom “ “ Martin “

We haven't done any long trips this year except for our usual week at the Bunya Mountains and a few days in north – eastern New South Wales - Grafton, Glen Innes , Inverell etc during July when lots of Acacias were in flower along the roadsides and lots of Helichrysum elatum, Senecio spp, Banksia marginata and Leucopogon spp were in flower in Washpool and Gibraltar Range National Parks.

#### Australian Plants garden at the Australian Embassy in Tokyo

An Australian plants garden has been established at the Australian Embassy at Tokyo , Japan under the direction of Jason Sher . The area of the garden is approx. 180 m<sup>2</sup>. It has an eastern aspect and is surrounded by buildings on three sides . It receives about 5 – 6 hours of sun each day . Most of the plants are being grown in raised beds but drainage , in general, is very good as most of Tokyo is built on a rich volcanic ash which can be up to 50 metres deep in places . The Embassy grounds are a disturbed site so the area where the garden has been established has about 15 to 20 cm of imported topsoil over a semi-clayey soil . The garden is built on a slope which gives good surface drainage . Prior to the establishment of the garden the area was under turf. The average annual rainfall for Tokyo is 1404 mm . Average temperatures range from about 10C in January to 31oC in August but summer temperatures can get up to 38oC - 40oC with humidity up to 90% . The weather for 2003 was unseasonal with an extended rainy season and lower than normal summer temperatures . The area where the Embassy is located appears to be free of frost but an occasional snow fall is experienced.

Plants being grown in the garden are :

**Acacia** baileyana, A. floribunda, A. podalyrifolia, **Anigosanthus manglesii**, **Callistemon citrinus** “ Mauve Mist “ , C. glaucus, C. sieberi, **Eucalyptus sideroxylon rosea**, **Grevillea** “ Coconut Ice “ , G. “ Bronze Rambler “ , G. “ Robin Gordon “ , G. “ White Wings “ , ( all the Grevillea cultivars are grafted ) , **Hardenbergia violacea**, **Melaleuca armillaris**, M. thymifolia , M. nesophila , **Swainsona formosa** , **Hibbertia scandens** , **Kennedia rubicunda** , **Lomandra longifolia** , **Leptospermum epacridoideum** , **Xanthorrea preissii**

**Acacia baileyana** is a very popular plant in Japan and flowers heavily each spring but Jason advises that a number of Australian plants of various species succumb to the high humidity experienced during summer

### National Botanic Gardens of Wales, U.K

The National Botanic Gardens of Wales is located within a 568 hectare site in 18<sup>th</sup> century parkland of former Middleton Hall at Llanarthne in West Wales. The feature of the gardens is the Great Glasshouse which measures 110 metres long by 60 metres wide with an interior landscape of 3500 m<sup>2</sup>. The roof contains 785 panels of glass. Each panel is 4 metres by 1.5 metres and is made of 18 mm thick laminated glass.

The section in which the Australian plants are being grown is on 2 levels and covers an area of about one quarter of the green house area and, among these plantings are rocks, gravels and charred bushes 'planted' to show the important role of fire in the Australian environment.

Plants being grown in these gardens and which relate to this study group are :

**Beaufortia** squarrosa, B. sparsa, **Callistemon** "Kings Park Special", C. "Captain Cook", C. citrinus "Splendens", C. phoeniceus, C. rigidus, C. speciosus, **Calothamnus** quadrifidus, C. quadrifidus (prostrate), C. quadrifidus (dwarf), C. quadrifidus (grey), C. rupestris, C. sanguineus, C. validus, **Darwinia** citriodora, D. citriodora (prostrate), D. collina, D. "Coolamon Pink", D. leijostyla, D. nieliana, **Hypocalymma** angustifolium, H. angustifolium "rubrum?", H. cordifolium "Golden Veil", **Kunzea** ambigua, K. baxteri, K. ericifolia, K. ericoides, K. pomifera, **Melaleuca** acuminata, M. armillaris, M. bracteosa, M. citrina, M. elliptica, M. fulgens (pink), M. fulgens (purple), M. fulgens (red), M. huegelii, M. incana, M. laterita, M. radula, M. rhapsophylla, M. scabra, M. thymifolia

A large number of plants from other genera are also being grown, the majority from south-west Western Australia but with some from the eastern States

### Feature Plant - Melaleuca quinquenervia

The specific epithet for this plant derives from the Latin *quinque* – 5, and *nervus*, a nerve or vein, referring to the 5-veined leaves. Its natural habitat extends along the east coast of Australia and adjacent inland from Cape York southwards to about Sydney where it is found in coastal swamps and along watercourses, often with roots submerged for long periods. Its range also extends to New Guinea and to New Caledonia. In southern Queensland it is often found growing in pure stands but is often found growing in association with *Melaleuca linariifolia* which also prefers wet situations for best growth. A mixed stand of *M. quinquenervia* and *M. linariifolia* makes an attractive vista.

*M. quinquenervia* can grow to a height of about 25 metres and is papery-barked. Trunk diameter can reach 600 mm in old trees. Leaves are thick-textured and can be 50 to 90 mm long by 6 to 20 mm wide. The predominant flower colour is creamy-white

with greenish - cream variations sometimes seen . These forms usually flower from about February to about mid - to - late winter . A red flowering form, which usually flowers during winter, is occasionally seen . The red flowering form makes a good garden subject as it tends to have a smaller growing habit than its counterparts .

Propagation is by seed but the red form should be propagated by cutting to ensure that the red flower colour is maintained . *M. quinquenervia* makes a good plant for large gardens and for parks as it hardy under a wide range of conditions, maintains good shape without pruning and provides good shade . It is also useful for street plantings as it is quite stable in high winds and requires little attention for maximum effect.

The flowers produce copious quantities of nectar which attracts birds and insects . Rainbow Lorrikeets find it particularly attractive . It is a good honey producer with the honey being a dark brown colour.

It is not susceptible to many pests and diseases except for the Leaf-spotting Mirid Bug which attacks young leaves and can damage the appearance of young plants . As the plants increase in size the damage is much less noticeable . Attack by these insects does not appear to have any detrimental effect on plant growth.

### Garden Reports

The following report has been submitted by John Pym who is a member of the Blue Mountains Group in New South Wales.

John's block is basically sandstone with an average slope of one in six. The natural soils are subject to leaching and , possibly , are of low natural fertility . Plants being grown , and the conditions under which they are being grown , are :

#### **Calothamnus**

*villosus* - growing in 100 mm of imported soil over stiff clay - drainage is poor - the plant is straggly but flowers well

*quadridifolius* - growing in clay - drainage is good – plant is very vigorous

#### **Kunzea**

*ambigua* – growing in natural sandstone – drainage is good – plant is growing very well

#### **Callistemon**

*comboynensis* - growing in 100 mm of imported soil over stiff clay – drainage is poor – plant took 9 years to flower and now flowers sporadically

*viminalis* - growing in heaped imported soil over stiff clay – drainage is good – growing and flowering very well

### **Leptospermum**

polygalifolium ( 1 ) - growing in heaped excavated soil ( sandstone base ) – Drainage is good – plant condition is good

polygalifolium ( 2 ) – growing in high silt content fill over ash – drainage is poor – plant is growing well

juniperinum – growing in high silt content fill over ash – drainage is poor – plant growing well

lanigerum – growing in high silt content fill over ash - drainage is poor – plant growing well

liversidgei – growing in high silt content fill over ash – drainage is poor – plant growing fairly well but branches die occasionally

macrocarpum – growing in natural sandstone – drainage is good – plant growing fairly well but a bit straggly

petersonii ( 1 ) – growing in high silt content fill over ash - drainage is poor – plant growing well

petersonii ( 2 ) – growing in natural sandstone – drainage is good - plant growing well

rotundifolium – growing in high silt content fill over ash – drainage is poor – plant growing well

squarrosium – growing in high silt content fill over ash – drainage is poor – plant growing well

### **Members reports**

Charles Loxley from Willmot , New South Wales advises that he has a plant of *Calothamnus pinifolius* currently in flower . From the photograph in “ Bottlebrushes, Paperbarks and Tea-trees “ it appears to be an attractive plant. Charles also advises he has a 6 metre high plant of *Melaleuca stypheloides* which flowers poorly. (Editors Note - *M. stypheloides* is used fairly widely as street tree in Brisbane and , although they flower each year , in some years the flowering is quite poor ) . Also growing in Charles’s garden are a number of plants of *Callistemon* “ Kings Park Special “ which, apparently , are growing quite well

Jeff Irons from Heswall in United Kingdom advises that a nurseryman in England is importing Australian plants , from Australia , in glass wool plugs which are hydroponically grown . He gets them in November and sells them at the Hampton Court Flower Show the following June .. His present listing is -

*Beaufortia micrantha*, *orbifolia*, *sparsa*, *squarrosa*

*Hypocalymma angustifolium*

*Eremea beaufortoides* , *pauciflora*

*Regelia velutina*

Jeff advises that recent years have seen changes in the weather pattern in the United Kingdom. Autumn has become longer and warmer with slow warming up in spring, and with little frost during winter. With the prolonged warm weather plants are not prepared for cold weather when it does arrive with the result that losses can be high. Jeff advises

that he has not known a West Australian plant to survive winter in his part of the world. Most of the Australian plants he grows are from Tasmania with a few from the east coast of Australia . During a wet winter the water table in Jeff's garden can be at surface level and about 1 metre below surface level in a drier summer.

Plants being grown are :

**Austromyrtus dulcis** ssp. *acutus*

**Baeckea** *gunniana*

**Callistemon** *pityoides*, *salignus*, *subulatus*, *viridiflorus* " Crescent Head "

**Euromyrtus** *ramosissima* ssp *prostrata*

**Kunzea** *ambigua*, *muellerii*, " Badja Carpet "

**Melaleuca** *pustulata*, *squamea*, *squarrosa*, *thymifolia*, + seedlings of *M.* " Megalong Valley "

**Leptospermum** *arachnoides*, *blakelyi*, *grandiflorum* ( green leaf form ), *grandifolium*, *lanigerum*, *riparium* ( 2 provenances ), *rotundifolium*, " Mount Imlay " , *rotundifolium* " Julie Ann " , *rupestre*, *scoparium* ( 2 provenances - one with pink stamens grown from seed collected from a pink flowered plant at Yorktown in Tasmania )

David Widdop from Corowa in N.S,W, advises that his area has experienced a wet winter with the result that many of his *Correa* plants rotted off at the base . David is very knowledgeable on the *Correa* genus and has delivered a number of addresses on the genus to various groups. Other plants of interest being grown by David are :

**Regelia** *ciliata* – this plant is now some 20 years old and has suffered from drought conditions but has survived although it does need pruning at present

**Regelia** *megacephala* - is a strong growing plant which has survived a battering caused by a large pine tree falling on it a few years ago . It is currently carrying vigorous new growth and it flowers well each year

**Leptospermum** " Merinda " - is slow growing and tends to be prostrate . It does not flower well

**Leptospermum** " Rudolph " - is fast growing and very vigorous . It took 3 –4 years to produce its first flowers but last year was spectacular ( Editors note – I have a feeling this plant is another cultivar of *Leptospermum spectabile* but if any member has definite information as to its parentage please let me know . )

**Callistemon** " Hinchinbrook " - benefits from rainfall and good drainage

David is also experimenting with growing some *Leptospermum* cultivars in containers .

**Leptospermum** " Rhiannon " – has not flowered in 3 years

**Leptospermum** " Merinda " - is prostrate and is currently ( Nov. 2003 ) flowering well

**Leptospermum** " Pageant " – was spectacular in flower but has been set back by insect attack . It is currently recovering

**Leptospermum** " Tickled Pink " - flowered well last year but succumbed to insect attack

**Leptospermum** "Outrageous" – flowered spectacularly but deteriorated even though they are now recovering ( Editors note – the last 3 plants in this list - L. "Pageant," "Tickled Pink", and "Outrageous" are unknown to me . Should any member know of their origins please let me know . )

Due to the cool winter experienced in Victoria this year the Callistemons in David's garden were 3-4 weeks late in flowering . The ones which flowered well are :

**Callistemon** pinifolius ( green and red forms ) , "Lavender Showers" . Some , namely "Packers Selection" and "Eastland" , produced new leaf growth without flowering .

**Melaleuca fulgens** subsp. *stedmanii* - has flowered exceptionally well this year

**Melaleuca pulchella** appreciated the winter rain and has flowered well

**Melaleuca elliptica** has not flowered well in previous years – rarely more than 5 or 6 spikes at any one time - but this year it really excelled itself and produced about 100 spikes on a plant which is now some 3 metres high

### Seed List

A current seed list is attached . Some comments relating to the list are :

\* - *Melaleuca citrina* and *Melaleuca thymoides* do not fit the concept of *Melaleuca* as presently adopted and their taxonomic position is being reviewed. They may , eventually, be placed in a different genus

\*\* - The broad - leaved form of *Callistemon polandii* comes from the Cape Flattery area of north Queensland

\*\*\* - the seed bank is carrying 5 forms of *Leptospermum polygalifolium* as follows :

- the commonly known white flowering form , probably subsp *polygalifolium* , which is fairly common along the east coast of Australia
- a form from Mannering Creek near Wyee , between Sydney and Newcastle on the east coast of New South Wales, which is reputed to have red-tipped new growth
- a form from Mannering Creek near Wyee which is reputed to have line –green new growth
- a supposedly red flowering form of unknown origin
- a very pale pink flowering form from the sandstone country of central Queensland which adjoins the *Salvator Rosa* section of the Carnarvon National Park.

**SEED LIST - December 2003**

**MELALEUCA**

- acuminata ✓
- adnata ✓
- alternifolia ✓
- arcana ✓
- argentea ✓
- armillaris ✓
- bracteata ✓
- brevifolia ✓
- bromeloides ✓
- calycina ✓
- cardiophylla ✓
- ~~citrina \*~~
- coccinea ✓
- conothamnoides ✓
- cordata ✓
- cornucopia ✓
- cuticularis ✓
- dealbata ✓
- decora ✓
- decussata ✓
- densa ✓
- diosmafolia ✓
- diosmatafolia ✓
- eleuterostachya ✓
- elliptica ✓
- ericifolia ✓
- fabri ✓
- fulgens ✓
- fulgens subsp corrugata ✓
- gibbosa ✓
- glabberima ✓
- glomerata ✓
- halmatororum ✓
- huegelii ✓
- huegelii ( purple bud ) ✓
- hypericifolia ✓
- incana ✓
- lanceolata ✓
- lateritia ✓
- laxiflora ✓
- leucadendra ( broad-leaved form ) ✓
- linariifolia ✓
- linariifolia ( Snowstorm ) ✓
- linophylla ✓
- macronychia ✓
- megacephala ✓
- " Megalong Valley " ✓
- microphylla ✓
- minutifolia ✓
- nematophylla ✓

*spathulata*

*brachyandrus*

**MELALEUCA**

- nervosa ✓
- nesophila ✓
- nodosa ✓
- pallescens ✓
- pauperiflora ✓
- pentagona ✓
- pulchella ✓
- pungens ✓
- quinquenervia ✓
- radula ✓
- rhapsiophylla ✓
- sapientes ✓
- scabra ✓
- scabra ( tall form ) ✓
- scabra ( dual colour ) ✓
- sieberi ✓
- sp. aff. cornucopia ✓
- sp. aff. globifera ✓
- sp. aff. microphylla ✓
- spicigera ✓
- squamea ✓
- squarrosa ✓
- striata ✓
- stypheloides ✓
- suberosa ✓
- subfalcata ✓
- systema ✓
- tamariscina ✓
- teretifolia ✓
- thymifolia ✓
- thymoides \* ✓
- thyoides ✓
- tricophylla ✓
- tricostachya ✓
- uncinata ✓
- undulata ✓
- viminea ✓
- violacea ✓
- viridiflora ( red ) ✓
- viridiflora ( burgundy ) ✓
- wilsonii ✓

**CALLISTEMON**

- " Adina " ✓
- chisholmii ✓
- citrinus ✓
- comboynensis ✓
- " Endeavour " ✓
- flavo-virens ✓
- " Guyra Hybrid " ✓
- linearifolius ✓

**CALLISTEMON**

- linearis ✓
- " Mr. Foster " ✓
- Mrs. Foetel " ✓
- pachyphyllus ( green ) ✓
- pachyphyllus ( red ) ✓
- pallidus ✓
- pauciflorus ✓
- pearsonii ✓
- phoeniceus ✓
- pinifolius ( green ) ✓
- pinifolius ( red ) ✓
- pityoides ✓
- polandii ✓
- polandii ( broad-leaved form ) \*\* ✓
- polandii ( Pyramid form ) ✓
- pungens ✓
- " Purple Splendour " ✓
- " Pygmy Pink " ✓
- recurvus ✓
- rigidus ✓
- rugulosus ✓
- salignus ( white ) ✓
- shiresii ✓
- sieberi ✓
- sp. ex Malawi ✓
- sp. ✓
- sp. ( red ) ✓
- sp. " Mount Mee " ✓
- terteifolius ✓
- viminalis ( Malawi Giant ) ✓
- viridiflorus ✓
- violaceus ✓

**LEPTOSPERMUM**

- arachnoides ✓
- continentale ✓
- coriaceum ✓
- epacrodoideum ✓
- erubescens ✓
- glaucescens ✓
- grandiflorum ✓
- grandifolium ✓
- lanigerum ✓
- laevigatum ✓
- luehmannii ✓
- minutifolium ✓
- neglectum ✓
- nitidum ✓
- obovatum ✓
- " Pacific Beauty " ✓
- polygalifolium \*\*\* ✓

**LEPTOSPERMUM**

- riparium ✓
- rotundifolium ✓
- rupestre ✓
- scoparium ( Apsley, Tas ) ✓
- scoparium ( S.W. Tas ) ✓
- ~~scoparium var. eximium~~
- semibaccatum ✓
- speciosum ✓
- spectabile " Rhiannon " ✓
- spinescens ✓
- squarrosus ✓

**CALOTHAMNUS**

- asper ✓
- chrysantherus ✓
- gilesii ✓
- quadrifidus ✓
- rupestris ✓
- sanguineus ✓
- vallidus ✓
- villosus ✓

**KUNZEA**

- ambigua ✓
- baxteri ✓
- capitata ✓
- parvifolia ✓
- pomifera ✓
- recurva ✓

**REGELIA**

- cymbifolia ✓
- inops ✓
- velutina ✓

**PHYMATOCARPUS**

- maxwellii ✓

Late addition -

**Callistemon**

- brachyandrus ✓