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*ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING
AUSTRALIAN PLANTS*

MELALEUCA AND ALLIED GENERA STUDY GROUP

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NEWSLETTER NO : 28 June 2004

Dear Members ,

Half of 2004 is nearly gone so I thought I had better get to and produce another newsletter . I mentioned this to a friend of mine the other day and his reply was “ not only is half the year nearly gone but also nearly half the decade “ . We have had good rain here in the past 6 months - 800 mm to the end of April and fairly consistent showers since then although the heavier falls have been patchy and have not produced a lot of runoff to fill water storages . Many plants , including the Callistemons , have flowered very well this year with many of them producing 2 or 3 flushes of flower and, in fact, some of them are still producing a fairly heavy flush of flowers - particularly the pink flowering forms like “ Pink Champagne “ , “ Pink Delight “ , “ Pink Alma “ . Some of the red flowering forms have also flowered on for longer than would normally be expected - “ McIntosh “ , “ Wild River “ , viminalis and “ Pindi Pindi “ . C. citrinus “ White Anzac “ has been flowering almost continuously since the start of the year . C. comboynensis is flowering again whereas it usually flowers around Christmas time when there is often not much else in flower . The green form of C. pachyphyllus has flowered on beyond its normal flowering period .

Melaleuca linariifolia was disappointing this year as , except for a few plants , it did not flower well whereas it usually produces a heavy crop of flowers during January and into February. There is a small wetland area near us in which the trees are predominantly M. linariifolia and M. quinquenervia which is quite spectacular when the M. linariifolia is in flower in early summer and the M. quinquenervia is in flower in autumn and into winter. Melaleuca “ Claret Tops “ is a very good form of M. linariifolia for small gardens . It grows to a maximum of about 2 metres , retains a neat, rounded shape without need of pruning and produces dark red new growth over virtually the whole of the outside of the plant throughout the year. It does produce a few white flowers but is not a prolific flowerer. M. leucadendra , both broad-leaved and narrow-leaved forms have been flowering well with the narrow-leaved forms producing another heavy flush of flowers at present and the broad-leaved forms producing a few flowers. Melaleuca viridiflora produced , and is continuing to

produce , its usual spectacular display. It usually flowers on from early to mid-autumn into the winter. The red form is the most eye-catching of the lot but the green , pink and white flowered forms are also very attractive . Some of the attributes of *M. viridiflora* are that it is not a large tree , retains a good shape without the need for excessive pruning , is attractive even when not in flower and will fit into most gardens quite well particularly in the current situation where house blocks are , generally , getting smaller.

The “ Aussie Blossom “ series of *Leptospermum* started to flower in April and are still producing more and bigger quantities of flower . Although these plants seem to prefer full sun they have shown they will flower well in moderate shade . An added attraction with these forms is that the dark pink flowered form produces dark, maroon coloured new growth which is an attraction on its own. They don't seem to be particular about the soil type they are asked to grow in - surviving just as well in heavy clay as in sandy loam. Are any members growing any of these forms? If so, please let me know how they are performing.

NEW CALLISTEMONS

Byron Williams has advised that the Plant Varieties web site is listing a new variety of *Callistemon* with the request for registration coming from Redland Bay nursery in Queensland. The new cultivar has been named *Callistemon* “UnicalOne” and is reported to be a combination of *C. viminalis* “Captain Cook” and *C. “Little John”*. Flower colour is red - colour code 46B. (Colour code for *C. Capt Cook* “ is 46C and for *C. “ Little John “* 46A) It would be interesting to know whether or not the *C. “ Capt. Cook “* used in the cross pollination process is one of the original dwarf forms or whether it may be one of the later seedling grown forms which get quite large. Release date for this cultivar is not known at this stage .

Another new *Callistemon* which has come on the market here is *C. “ Burgundy Jack “* which is reputed to grow to a height of 3 metres with a spread of 2 metres . It produces reddish purple flowers . I have planted one here and I will keep you informed as to its progress.

The *Callistemon* previously sold under the name of *C. “Woolumbin”* is now being marketed under the name of *C. “Tangerine Dream”*. It is currently available in nurseries in Victoria but I have not seen it here to date . The leaves on *C. “ Tangerine Dream “* appear to be slightly wider than the leaves on *C. “Woolumbin”* but this may just be a minor variation linked to climate, soil type , age of plant etc. According to the label the flower colour is the same deep orange as *C. “Woolumbin”*.

CALLISTEMONS OVERSEAS

The web site of the Royal Horticultural Society in the U.K. list the following *Callistemons* which are unknown in Australia.

<i>C. pityoides</i> from Browns Swamp , Australia (does anyone know where that is ?)	
<i>C. pinifolius</i> “ Sockeye”	<i>C. pinifolius</i> yellow
<i>C. subulatus</i> “Crimson Trail”	<i>C. viridiflorus</i> “ Country Park Dwarf”
<i>C. viridiflorus</i> “ Sunshine”	<i>C. citrinus</i> “ Yellow Queen”

C. "Country Park"

C. "Canberra"

Colours of the cultivars mentioned above are not given except for those given in the names

In the U.S A. we have C. "Burning Bush" which is reported to produce carmine coloured flowers and grow to a height of 4 feet , C. " Woodlanders Hardy Red", C. "Woodlanders Light Yellow" , C " Jeffersii" and C. " Jeffersii Dwarf" reported to produce purple / red flowers .

I suppose that , in other countries, they do as we do - when something a bit different turns up we give it a new name to identify it and separate from other similar plants !!!

MEMBERS REPORTS

Byron Williams advises that he has had a plant known as C. " Deery" growing in his garden since 1971 but could never find out its parentage . In 1972 Byron acquired a cutting of a form of C. comboynesis with narrower leaves than the normal broad leaved form . Last year the C. " Deery" plant was looking ill so cuttings were taken of this plant at the same time as cuttings were taken from the C. comboynesis . Plants grown from these cuttings are now 40 cm high and have leaves which are identical in every respect - maybe C. " Deery" is a form of C. comboynesis ?

Paul Kennedy wrote in April to say they had not received any rain since mid-December and have been through the driest 3 months on record. Temperatures of up to 40oC were recorded during February. Despite the dryness and the heat no Melaleuca species or cultivars were lost. The hardiest of the Melaleucas appear to be M. wilsonii, M. elliptica, M. cordata, M.glomera and M.megacephala as they appear to have withstood the dry and heat best of all. Callistemons have proved themselves to be very hardy with C. forresterae (sold as C. " Genoa Glory") , C. pachyphyllus and C. recurvus in flower in autumn . Melaleuca armillaris plants went very brown and lost leaves but , following a heavy watering, they have recovered quite well.

BOOK REVIEWS

Melaleucas - A Field and Garden Guide by Ivan Holliday

This excellent book is the latest in the line of Ivan's successful books and contains descriptions of all the 219 species of Melaleuca currently recognised with the majority of descriptions (approx 200), being accompanied by a colour photograph of the flower and, with some of them, the plant also. In addition to the 219 species there are also descriptions of 3 species currently under review in the M. uncinata group, 16 subspecies, 5 varieties and 10 garden forms and unnamed species - a total of 253 different Melaleucas. Line drawings of complete flowers, a single flower, leaves and fruit and the tree/shrub habit of growth are included with each description . In many cases , where reference is made to similar plants, line drawings of flowers/leaves/fruit of those plants are also included .

Details for each species/cultivar/form includes a description of the plant - tree shrub etc and details of the bark type , description of the size and shape of leaves, flower colour and flower location - terminal/axillary/ on old wood - and whether they are in rounded heads or in spikes , a description of the size and shape of the fruits , distribution of the species , distinguishing features and cultivation requirements where these are known. . The book also contains a short article on cultivation of Melaleuca species in general and has a number of pages showing floral and ovary details and some of the various leaf shapes which may be found on various species.

Copies of the book are currently available from the Qld Region book sales officer and, no doubt, will be available from other Regions sales officers in the near future if not already available. This book will be a useful addition to any library and is highly recommended.

Come and Meet Us - An Australian ABC
By Elizabeth Mc Robert

Aa indicates Acacia, Bb shows Brachychiton and Blandfordia, Cc is for Caladenia and Callistemon : -- and so it goes on through the alphabet. One or more genus of Australian plants is represented by each letter of the alphabet. The information for each letter of the alphabet covers 2 x A4 pages and in each case an excellent colour drawing of the subject plant/s is shown. A short poem relates to each of the genus shown on the page together with the botanical and common names and the accepted pronunciation of the name of each genus. All text and illustrations have been completed by the author. Each page is introduced by a stylised Diuris flower. In addition to plants and flowers a number of Australian animals and birds are featured throughout the book. (Authors note: "this book is designed to introduce young people to the magic of the real world of the Australian bush, and to have them grow up familiar with the scientific names of plants and creatures found there. In their later lives they more readily accept Latin nomenclature by which flora and fauna are precisely and scientifically defined"). The book is aimed at young people but, as one of the older members of Qld Region stated "adults can get a lot out of it also". It is considered this book would be a welcome addition to any coffee table .

Copies are available from the publishers at a cost of \$22.00 which includes packing and postage. Their address is - Copyright Publishing , G.P.O. Box 2927 , Brisbane , Qld 4001 - telephone 07 3229 6366

MELALEUCA FOREST

I came across the following article, written in July 2003 , which I thought may be of interest to members : -

Summary of Melaleuca forest information -

The common name for a number of Melaleuca species is paperbark, an apt description of the papery bark consisting of thin layers of cork . The leaves of a few Melaleuca species supply the raw material for an expanding tea tree oil industry : tea tree oil is used as an antimicrobial antiseptic oil or formulated into creams, shampoos , soaps, mouthwashes and toothpastes.

The genus *Melaleuca* is predominantly Australian, although some species occur in Indonesia, Malaysia, New Caledonia, New Guinea and the Pacific Islands. In Australia, Specht and his co-authors identified 51 *Melaleuca* plant communities. Of these, 15 form forest in which *Melaleuca* species are considered the most dominant canopy species; these constitute the *Melaleuca* forests described below. The most extensive *Melaleuca* forests are dominated by *M. dealbata* (blue-leaved paperbark), *M. leucadendra*, (long-leaved paperbark), *M. minutifolia* and *M. viridiflora* (broad-leaved paperbark).

Distribution of *Melaleuca* forests in Australia

There are more than 4 million hectares of *Melaleuca* forests, of which more than 90 per cent occur in the Northern Territory and northern Queensland.

Melaleuca forests occur on a wide range of sites throughout non-arid Australia. Generally, these are damp or wet sites such as coastal or sub-coastal areas that dry out seasonally



Often these forests are narrow strips of dense, pure stands tens of metres wide along streams and swamps. About 75 per cent of *Melaleuca* forests in northern Australia are large tracts of low woodland spread across estuarine plains and seasonal swamps. The figure shows the regions of the continent in which this forest type is found

Tenure of *Melaleuca* forests

Nationally, about 88 per cent of *Melaleuca* forests occur on leasehold or private land used for cattle production and about 8 per cent are located in conservation reserves

FEATURE PLANTS

Callistemon pauciflorus :- is the only known *Callistemon* growing naturally in the Northern Territory. It is found near the edges of pools and in steep gorges in the Macdonnell, Petermann and Harts Ranges in the southern part of the Territory. It is a small to medium shrub to a height of about 3 metres with an open habit. Older branches tend to be pendulous with pink, hairy new growth. Adult leaves are greyish and 6 to 9 cm long by 5 to 8 mm wide. The pinkish-red flower spikes are up to 4 cm long by 2 cm in diameter. Fruits are globular and about 3 mm in diameter

There are a number of plants of this species in the Alice Springs Desert Park which are growing well and were carrying quite a few flowers when we were there in September 2000. I have a plant of this species growing in a container which is now 12 months old, nearly 1 metre high and it has flowered on two occasions, only a few flowers on each occasion but it may improve as it gets older. Do any other members

have this plant growing ? . If so , please let me know how it is performing . I have noted it is very attractive to sawfly and needs fairly constant attention during summer to keep it free of their larva . I feel that *C. pauciflorus* would be a good garden plant in a wide range of soil and climate conditions . I have a small amount of seed in the seed bank if any member is interested in trying it in their garden.

Leptospermum venustum : - is known only from a small area to the west of Eidsvold in the Burnett Region of Queensland . It grows to about 2 metres with arching branches and is found on hillsides or slopes or along watercourses in granitic soils in eucalypt woodland. Bark is grey, rough , scaly and persistent throughout . Leaves are 6 to 13 mm long by 3 to 4 mm wide and contain many conspicuous oil glands . Flowers are borne singly on short side branches , are deep pink and up to 25 mm in diameter. Flowering period is usually July to October . Fruits , which may be up to 8 mm in diameter , are fleshy and succulent when fresh , brown and wrinkled when dry. I have tried growing this species but, although it persisted for a year or so it showed no sign of flowering . Liesbeth Uijtewaal has grown and flowered it in Holland . I have been trying to obtain supplies of seed of this species for the seed bank but, to date , without success. .

SEED LIST

The following seed has been added to the seed list -

Melaleuca spathulata
Leptospermum parvifolium
Asteromyrtus magnifica

The following seed is out of stock -

Melaleuca bromeloides , M. citrina
Callistemon pinifolius (green) , C. “ Purple Splendour” , C. “ Pygmy Pink” ,

RESPONSE OF POTTED CALLISTEMONS TO HIGH SALINITY

You may recall, in previous newsletters , my reference to an Agricultural student in Pisa , Italy who I had been corresponding with for some time while he was studying and preparing his thesis on Callistemon . He has forwarded a copy of his thesis to me on CD but, unfortunately, it is in Italian (which I can't read) except for this article on “ Reponse of Callistemon to high salinity”. A copy of his report on response to salinity is attached which I hope will be of interest to you. I tried to get his thesis translated into English but couldn't find anyone interested in doing it !!.

STUDY GROUP REPORT NUMBER 2

Study Group Report Number 2 is now available . It contains a summary of information submitted by members in respect of the plants from various genera which are being grown in gardens in addition to information from various other sources , rainfall and climatic data for the towns closest to the property where these plants are being grown and notes on soil types, drainage , pests and diseases etc . Genera

included are - Callistemon , Melaleuca , Leptospermum , Kunzea , Calothamnus , Beaufortia , Eremaea , Phymatocarpus , Regelia and Hypocalymma. The cost of the report is \$12. 00 which includes postage.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Receipts		Expenditure	
Balance as at 9/9/03 -	\$769.26	Rainfall records -	\$22.00
Membership fees -	\$128.27	Petty cash -	\$87.95
Bank interest -	\$1.77	Printer ink -	\$66.99
		Reg. Post –slide	
Total	\$899.09	sets and stamps -	\$73.30
Plus unrepresented cheque -	\$9.65	Seed -	\$23.05
		Photocopy NL 27	
Total	\$908.95	& S.G. report 2 -	\$73.00
		Postage NL 27 -	\$32.70
		Photocopies -	\$12.00
		GDT -	\$ 4.50
		Total	- \$395.49
Less expenditure	\$395.49		
Total	\$ 513.46		

Balance as per bank statement 07 – 06 – 2004 - \$513.46

The unrepresented cheque is in favour of Nindethana Seed Suppliers who are holding it until seed of M. bromeloides becomes available .

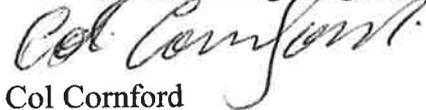
SLIDE SETS

The slide sets of Callistemon, Melaleuca and Leptospermum are available for loan to groups or individuals . The study group pays the cost of outward postage by registered post and it is expected that the borrower pay the cost of return postage by the same method . To date the slide sets have been borrowed a total of 20 times by various Australian plant groups throughout Australia .

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Membership fees are due on July 1 . Renewal notice is attached . If no renewal notice is attached it indicates your subscription is up to date . Membership fees will remain at - Australia \$5.00 - overseas \$ AUS 12.00 for the 2004/05 year

Cheers for now and good gardening



Col Cornford