



# *Ptilotus Study Group*

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P.O. BOX 14,

GLADSTONE.

N.S.W. 2440.

Welcome to the Ptilotus Study Group!

Ptilotus belong to the family Amaranthaceae, which contains the exotics Alternanthera, Celosia and Gomphrena, which have some flower similarities to Ptilotus.

There are approximately 100 species of Ptilotus in Australia, one occurs in Tasmania and one in South Malaysia. They range from tiny weak ephemerals to robust, shrubby perennials. The flowers vary in size, shape and colour. Some varieties have excellent horticultural potential as a landscape plant and cut flower.

I have trialled two species for cut flowers - Ptilotus nobilis and P. exaltatus. Both last well in water (up to 2 weeks) and dry well. One dried specimen is over 6 years old and still in good condition.

## Trials and Tribulations...

The two biggest barriers in researching Ptilotus:

- \* Difficulty in propagation
- \* Availability of plant material is limited (seed)

It appears that although Ptilotus produce a large volume of flower heads, very little viable seed may be contained in the debris. It will be interesting to see if this can be improved in cultivated plants.

I have conducted some germination trials, and would be delighted to hear from anyone who has had success, and their technique.

## Germination Trials

### Trial 1:

In this trial I painstakingly sorted seed, feeling for viable seeds, and then carefully removing the furry outer husk (the actual seed of this species is about the same size, shape and colour as a flea!) 10 of these seeds were then placed on damp paper towel in a plastic container and left on a bench in the house, out of direct sunlight

### Results:

*Ptilotus exaltatus*

<u>Day 1</u>	<u>Day 2</u>	<u>Day 3</u>	<u>Day 4</u>
10 seeds	2 root visible seed coat cracked on others		3 roots 2 shoots

### Trial 2:

This trial also used *P. exaltatus*, seed husk left on. It was conducted by Christine Mitchell and Lisa Vanajek of Kellyville Plant Patch, Sydney, in a glasshouse.

### No Germinated after 6 weeks

<u>Control</u>	<u>Vermiculite</u>	<u>Hot water</u>	<u>2:1 mix</u>
16	9	0	6
<u>Eziroot dip</u>	<u>Lemon juice</u>	<u>Smoke</u>	
1	8	16	

Results were inconclusive, as the number of viable seeds in each trial was unknown.

### Growing On

Some of the plants from the first trial are now in 6" pots and growing well. They appear to be very deep rooted - roots travel to

the bottom of the pot, very few to the sides. Tubes potted into 6" pots had roots at the bottom of the pot in 3 weeks.

Presently they are flowering, but the flowers are small, due to root restriction. I will pot them into 12" pots and see how they go.

Some are still in their tubes and have not grown at all. They appear to sulk if their roots are restricted. Growth when potted is rapid, from 2cm to 15cm in 3 weeks. They accept liquid or slow release fertilisers.

I hope this information will assist new members, and any other observations would be most welcome.



All the Best,



Karen Marriott,

Study Group Leader

PTILOTUS NOBILIS

