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# Ptilotus Study Group

No 6, July 2001.

P.O. Box 14,  
Gladstone.  
N.S.W. 2440.

Hello All,

Welcome to new members Ted & Jenny Finnie from Merriwa, N.S.W. – who have contributed some interesting information to this Newsletter.

My apologies to Anthony O'Halloran & Annabelle Greenup for leaving their names off the Membership List in the previous Newsletter.

## Propagation News

All the remaining seed in the Seed Bank was sown in May, with no successful germination of any variety. I am in the process of re-ordering more seed, so if any members would like some to try, please write or phone (02) 65 674 678.

There are a few tubes of Ptilotus obovatus available to individual members who would like to trial these fascinating plants.

These were grown by cuttings, which is quite a successful way of propagating this species.

Cutting mix used was:

2 parts perlite

2 parts polystyrene foam (bean bag filler)

½ part peat moss

Soft tip to semi-hardwood material was used, with all cuttings dipped in Clonex Red Hormone Gel, and placed into seed trays. (All cuttings were also wounded)

The trays went into an unheated igloo and were hand watered once or twice a day.

Cuttings were watered with the fungicide "Fongarid" at fortnightly intervals for the first month.

Autumn/Winter is not an ideal time to propagate, the warmer months of Spring – Autumn produce better & faster strike rates. The cooler weather also means some of the cuttings will rot off - this can be reduced with the use of fungicides & reduced watering.

The cuttings were done in May, with 39% tubed up in mid July. There are still quite a few to strike, and some losses due to rotting off.

Ptilotus obovatus is the most reliable perennial species I have grown (others such as P. exaltatus & macrocephalus have not survived after flowering). It can be quite variable, ranging from a groundcover to a 1 metre shrub. Flowers are small, button – like and vary from silver white to pink. It seems to cope with a range of soil & climate conditions.

#### Member's Report

Ted & Jennie Finnie report that they have two species of Ptilotus growing on their property.

They are located in Merriwa, which is between Dubbo & Newcastle in N.S.W.

From the description & sample the plants appear to be Ptilotus polystachyus (which has a long, greenish flower – see Dec 2000 Newsletter) and the other species is probably Ptilotus exaltatus var semilanatus, which is a round-flowered form of the well known Pink Mulla Mulla – Ptilotus exaltatus.

“The locality, while only 200km from the coast, receives an annual rainfall of 600mm. The plants occur on a gravelly clay hillside, with a NW – West aspect. Surrounding plant communities are grasses, low growing acacias and other low shrubs . We have also observed P. polystachyus around Dubbo”.

Thank you Ted & Jennie for this valuable information. It is great to find another population of Ptilotus east of the Great Dividing Range.

Contributions to the Newsletter are always welcome from any member or Group – please send in your experiences for all to share!

Til next time,



Karen Marriott,  
Study Group Leader.

## ASGAP PTILOTUS STUDY GROUP

### ANNUAL REPORT 2000 – 2001

#### MEMBERSHIP

Individuals : 6

Groups: 12

Honorary Membership : Peter Abell of Sydney University for research into Ptilotus

Two new individual members have joined since January 2001.

#### NEWSLETTERS

No 4 – July 2000 : Description of two species ready for commercial release by Sydney University. List of species (104) described in textbooks.

No 5 – December 2000 : Photos of various species in the wild – Northern Territory and South Australia.

#### CURRENT PROJECTS

- Continued trial of propagation techniques
- Trial of field grown plants as a commercial cut flower
- Continued collection of photos and descriptions of species

ASGAP PFILOTUS STUDY GROUP

Statement of Receipts & Payments

for the year 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2000– 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2001.

RECEIPTS:	\$
Membership Fees & Donations	100.00
Bank Interest	0.46
Total Receipts:	\$100.46

PAYMENTS

Newsletter Expenses	52.45
Postage	23.75
Stationery	3.20
Photos	20.00
Total Payments:	\$99.40

SURPLUS FOR YEAR \$1.06

SUMMARY:

Cash at bank at beginning of year	\$161.80
Surplus for year	\$1.06
Cash at bank at end of year	\$162.86