



SOCIETY FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS

RAINFOREST STUDY GROUP

PO Box E327 St James NSW 2000

Newsletter No. 5

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GROUP LEADER'S NOTES

It's been exactly a year since Newsletter No 4 but its successor is finally in print - hopefully the first of three or four regular bulletins for 1986.

1985 saw the Group's numbers swell to 99, with all the mainland states represented, plus some members from very much further afield.

Whilst the Group as an entity has been fairly slothful, we all individually seem to be extremely active insofar as propagation, cultivation, seed collecting and conservation are concerned. There is also a broad range of individual interests within the Group which is a very healthy sign. These interests range from land rehabilitation, rainforest regeneration and bushland management through to the horticultural development of our native rainforest trees and shrubs for urban landscape use. A common thread would appear to be our concern for wise stewardship of land, water, soil and vegetation.

Please send material for inclusion in forthcoming newsletters.

The Rainforest Study Group is very widely dispersed, both geographically and in terms of the interests of individual members.

The Newsletter therefore is ideally suited to becoming a forum for exchange - of ideas, information, contacts - and a means of communicating our interests and experiences to other geographically remote members.

Ideally the Newsletter will contain a minimum of administrative and will be able to concentrate on the issues at hand - propagation, cultivation, landscape uses, conservation, ecology, and perhaps occasionally environmental philosophy/ethics.

Deadline (provisional) for next issue :
Friday, 30th May, for publication sometime early in June.

CULTURAL NOTES

I would like to see this section become the dominant feature of each newsletter, with an emphasis on "landscape use" for rainforest plants : whether reforestation, land rehabilitation, plantation forestry, urban parks and gardens, or indoor decoration.

One of our aims should be to demonstrate that rainforest plants are desirable alternatives to many of the other natives used for these purposes; and to demystify their propagation and cultivation by producing evidence of our successes with particular species.

Over the next twelve months I'd expect us to gather enough material of this nature to be able to fill an issue of Australian Plants, and to dazzle SCAP readers with the spectacular beauty of the rainforest flora.

BOOKS

AUSTRALIAN RAINFOREST TREES, W.D. Francis
AGPS, Reprinted 1985
ISBN 0 642 05643 9 \$18.95

The classic study of the subject, first printed in 1921 and more or less continuously in print ever since.

Despite numerous changes in nomenclature and taxonomy, Australian Rainforest Trees remains an incredibly handy reference book for those interested in plant identification, cultivation or historical information on patterns of distribution and abundance.

The black and white photographs of trees in forests and rainforests of various areas are a superb record of Australia's subtropical and tropical rainforests before their large scale devastation through clearing for agriculture.

Highly recommended for history buffs.

RAINFORESTS OF AUSTRALIA, Ed. Penny Figgis
Kevin Weldon, 1985 \$45.00
ISBN 0 949708 23 2

This is a lavish coffee table style volume, profusely illustrated, and beautifully laid out. The text is admirably not too technical for the lay reader but successfully describes the major structural types and variations of Australian rainforests.

The arguments for the conservation of natural systems generally, and preservation of Australia's remaining rainforests specifically, are neatly expounded by the various contributing authors.

The colour photography is stunning throughout.

AUSTRALIAN RAINFOREST PLANTS, IN THE
FOREST AND IN THE GARDEN, Nan & Hugh
Nicholson, Terania Rainforest Nursery, 1985
ISBN 0 9589436 0 5 \$9.95

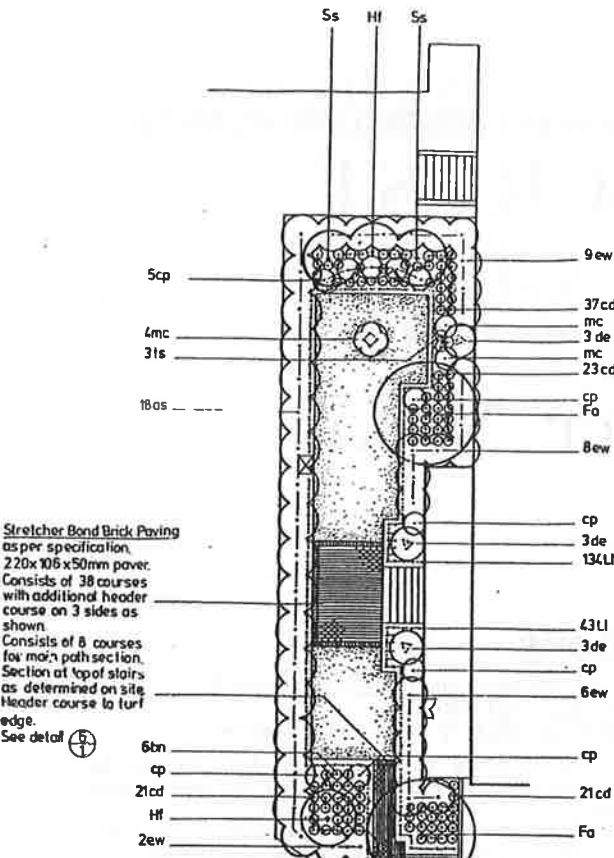
The admirably high sort of standard which this Study Group could aim for in publishing our experiences with Australian rainforest plants is exemplified by this compact volume.

Informative colour photos of each plant featured are accompanied by brief cultural notes and comments on the plant's uses for home gardening, special purposes etc.

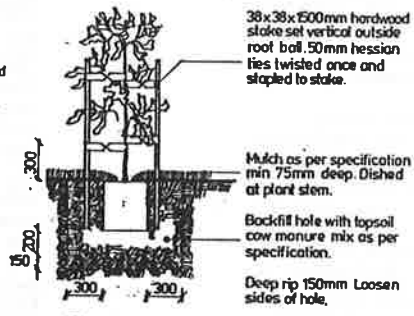
DAINTREE WHERE THE RAINFOREST MEETS THE REEF,
Rupert Russell
Kevin Weldon/ACF, 1985 \$35.00
ISBN 0 949708 12 7

Another voluptuous offering from Kevin Weldon, profusely and beautifully illustrated, which puts the case for the conservation of this last bastion of Australian tropical lowland rainforest. The book examines both the biogeography of the region and the pressures and events which currently threaten its continued existence.

The book ends with a plea for a sustainable future for the area as a Greater Daintree National Park - for the conservation of "two of Australia's greatest living wonders growing side by side."



PAVING LAYOUT AND PLANTING PLAN



Planting Detail Section scale: 20

PLANTING SCHEDULE

Sym	Species	No	Centres	Size	Min Height	Staking
Trees						
Fa	<i>Flindersia australis</i>	2	as shown	25 litre	1500	2 of 38x38x1500mm hardwood stakes with 4 hessian ties
Ss	<i>Stenocarpus sinuatus</i>	2	as shown	25 litre		
Palms						
Hf	<i>Howea forsterana</i>	2	as shown	35 litre	2000	* *
Shrubs						
as	<i>Acmena smithii</i>	18	1600	25 litre	1500	not required
de	<i>Doryanthes excelsa</i>	9	as shown	5 litre	300	* *
cp	<i>Crinum pedunculatum</i>	25	as shown	open ground	600	* *
ew	<i>Eugenia wilsonii</i>	10	1200	5 litre	350	* *
mc	<i>Macrorhiza communis</i>	6	as shown	*	700 frond	* *
ts	<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	3	400	*	400	* *
Ferns						
cd	<i>Culcita dubia</i>	102	500	150	300	* *
bn	<i>Blechnum nudum</i>	6	500	5 litre	*	* *
Groundcovers						
LI	<i>Lomandra longifolia</i>	177	400	150mm	200	* *

The Contractor is to contact the superintendents representative if plants are unavailable. No substitutions permitted.

speaker's garden, parliament house, sydney

The Speaker's Garden is a small rectangular area, wedged between the northern end of Parliament House in Macquarie Street, and the additions to the State Library. Approximately 25 x 5 meters in size, it is directly adjacent to the Speaker's Wing, hence its name.

The brief for the garden outlined three main requirements. The Garden was to respect its historical setting, its plant material was to be exclusively native, and due consideration was to be given to the site's difficult environmental conditions. This latter consideration recognizes the site's intensive winter shading resulting from the 12 metre high walls enclosing the garden on three sides. These walls also reflect heat and glare into the area during summer.

The basic design mirrors a small scale late Victorian terrace garden. The overall configuration of the garden beds, paving, and plant arrangements reflects the formality and use of axial relationships typical of the late 19th century.

The choice of predominantly rainforest species in the garden reflects their general adaptability to shade and moisture, as well as sun and occasional dryness. Many of the species also have the character and quality of plants usually found in a Victorian period garden.

Two *Flindersia australis* are placed symmetrically to the Speaker's Wing. Their semi-deciduous habit allows light to enter Parliamentary windows while providing a large scale element within the garden. At the eastern end of the garden two *Stenocarpus sinuatus* are placed to provide enclosure. Between them is one specimen of *Howea forsterana*, mirrored by another at

the western end. Five *Livistona australis* are located along the northern boundary, their placement projecting the facade elements of the Speaker's wing out into the garden.

Between them, and on either side is *Acmena smithii* densely planted to form a screen hedge. This is to be kept relatively low by annual trimming, to around 3 metres. Extensive use of *Eugenia wilsonii* has been made to form a continuous low hedge below the verandah and windows, where its pink and bronze new leaves and red flowers will be seen to advantage.

In order to add emphasis to the major entry point, a feature planting of *Crinum pedunculatum* and *Doryanthes excelsa* is located on either side of the steps leading into the garden. The *Crinum* is used extensively, either as individual feature elements on corners or entries, or as a major backdrop to smaller ferns at the eastern end of the garden.

The major groundcover used is *Culcita dubia*. This fern has proved spectacularly hardy and vigorous, forming a bright green canopy of leaves at around 600 mm high. This is edged in all areas of the garden by *Lomandra longifolia*, effective in its contrasting leaf shape, colour, and habit. At the western end of the garden a formal planting of *Blechnum nudum* is a focal point amongst the other ferns. On the verandah, five terracotta pots contain *Asplenium nidus*, bringing the rainforest feel of the garden into the building itself.

All the plants used have grown rapidly and reliably, confirming the value of rainforest flora in landscape projects. Hopefully the success of the plant material in the Speaker's Garden will encourage others to use rainforest species in other landscape designs.

GROWTH RATES & PLANT ESTABLISHMENT
David Jenkinson, Eastwood

I was somewhat surprised at checking the growth rates of some rainforest species that I have raised from seed. I planted out the largest specimens available and that I thought would establish quickly during last summer and presumed that they would romp ahead as soon as spring arrived. Most were quite small when planted out, some only about 8cm, but it appears that in a number of cases smaller plants overwintered in pots have outgrown those in the plantation.

It appears that fairly well established (but not potbound) plants will generally outgrow less advanced stock. Could other group members pass on their results?

Botanic name	Germination	Size November 1985	Date planted out	Height in pots November 1985
<i>Backhousia myrtifolia</i>	02.84	24 cm	01.85	52 cm
<i>Cryptocarya</i> sp.	10.84	13 "	02.85	23 "
<i>Ehretia acuminata</i>	10.84	35 "	02.85	40 "
<i>Emmenosperma</i> <i>aliphitonioides</i>	07.84	30 "	11.84	68 "
<i>Euodia micrococca</i>	11.84	16 "	01.85	42 "
<i>Harpullia pendula</i>	01.84	60 "	09.84	70 "

Botanic name	Date planted	Size at November 1985
<i>Alphitonia excelsa</i>	01.84	3.5 metres
<i>Commersonia fraseri</i>	02.84	4.75 "
<i>Elaeocarpus reticulatus</i>	01.84	3 "
<i>Syzygium australis</i> (<i>Acmena</i> ?)	08.84	1.75 "
<i>Toona australis</i>	02.84	3 "
<i>Trema aspera</i>	02.84	3.75 "
<i>Hymenosporum flavum</i>	01.81	6 "

RAINFOREST PLANTS AS STREET TREES

Some time ago Graham Quint made a request for sightings of Australian rainforest trees being used in street plantings. Below, are a few more sightings around Sydney.

Queensland members should be able to produce some interesting plantings from city and town streets for the next Newsletter. (A positive identification plus a sentence or two on how the species performs under the prevailing conditions.)

Alectryon tomentosus (SAPINDACEAE)

Hairy *Alectryon*, Quince

Location: Pacific Highway, Killara - Warrabee

Shapely, dense canopied medium sized tree with flushes of brilliantly coloured new leaves. Very healthy and robust despite adverse conditions.

Harpullia pendula (SAPINDACEAE)

Tulipwood

Locations: Tyler Crescent, Abbotsford; Spofforth St, Mosman

Tough under an apparently wide range of conditions. These are densely crowned, medium sized, bun shaped trees of an ideal scale for street planting. Additional attractions are brightly coloured flushes of new foliage and spectacular seed capsules.

Flindersia australis (FLINDERSIACEAE)

Teak, Crows Ash

Locations: Boundary St, Paddington; Cook Rd, Surry Hills; Missenden Rd, Camperdown

Superb, large ornamental trees casting dense shade. These perform well under very difficult conditions and deserve more widespread use.

Easy to propagate from seed and to establish in the ground. Trees around Sydney are of two distinct periods which, it is suspected, can be traced to the influence of J.H. Maiden, NSW Government Botanist, 1890's-1920's; and W.F. Swain, Forestry Commissioner, 1930's.

Alphitonia excelsa (RHAMNACEAE)

Red Ash

Location: Elizabeth St, near Bigge Park, Liverpool

A fine row of old trees growing on a heavy, poorly drained clay soil and in a low rain fall area. Not commonly planted around Sydney but deserving more use because of their toughness.

The lower table gives growth statistics of some plants in the ground at Eastwood. Height when planted out ranged from 30 - 45 cm.

SEED BANK

Any members who are able to share surplus stock of seeds which they have collected in the field are most welcome to send it via the Rainforest Study Group's post office box, or, directly to David Thomas who has indicated his willingness to continue operating a seed bank. Notwithstanding the problems of the limited periods of viability for many rainforest species, seed exchanges should be encouraged because they are important as a means of getting numerous species tested under differing conditions.

FINANCE/MEMBERSHIP

If members wish to see a financial statement for the group, please write and I will print it in the next newsletter.

The group's bank balance is presently pretty healthy as our outgoings have been fairly limited over the past few months, but it is suggested that members who haven't paid fees since December 1984 update their membership now in anticipation of a more active year in terms of newsletters and events.

NEW LEADER FOR RAINFOREST STUDY GROUP

Due to commitments to an expanding family and his professional responsibilities, the Group's founding leader Graham Quint has decided that the time has come to pass on the responsibilities to new hands.

The new leader, Ian Innes, who has been a member of the group since 1983, is a twenty seven year old landscape architect. He first became interested in Australian rainforest plants during his university days when he compiled a research paper on their use in historical park and garden planting. He is interested in the development of rainforest trees for use in parks, gardens and streets.

Ian enthusiastically hopes that the Rainforest Study Group can be galvanized into action collating and publishing the results of members' experiences with the cultivation of the rainforest flora it's delights and disappointments.