

July 1979.

While watching some of my prized stylidiums dry up and apparently die off during the summer, I got to wondering about what happens to them in their native habitat over summer. Enquiries to W.A. suggested that many of them die off completely, and survive as underground roots until the autumn rains, when they produce new shoots, followed by new roots during the winter. In fact, I think I have probably discarded some live plants by being misled by their appearance. Certainly many plants sent from W.A. appeared to die off but then recovered, and Keith Alcock, who has much more patience than I, is now being rewarded by resurgence of growth in apparently lifeless plants. We obviously have much to learn.

Survival of plants sent from W.A. was variable, but the greatest success was achieved when the "soil" into which they were planted was a "cutting mix", and conditions were similar to those used to strike cuttings, or to harden off newly transplanted seedlings, i.e. adequate moisture and free air circulation. The actual conditions ranged from a fully automatic propagating house with misting and forced ventilation, to the east side of a house at Montrose, in the open, under the eaves. The conditions of transport could have been better, and future consignments will be in partly inflated plastic bags, with sphagnum moss.

Seed is still essentially unobtainable, but several species have set seed here in Victoria in the past year. These include *S. breviscapum* at Macedon, but not Melton or Ballarat, *S. rhynocarpum* at Montnorency, *S. assinile* and *S. caespitosum* at Melton, so suitable insect vectors must be around. Artificial pollination is possible by "firing" a flower with mature pollen with a pointed wooden skewer or pencil, to gather pollen, then transferring the pollen to a flower with a mature stigma by "firing" it in such a way that the stigma strikes the pollen deposited on the pencil or skewer. Remember that the anthers/pollen matures first, followed by the stigma, so that self pollination is rarely possible. Try it and let me know the results.

I recently visited Alan Thomas in Ballarat and was pleasantly surprised at the health, vigorous appearance of his plants of *S. breviscapum* (S12), *S. rhynocarpum* (S15) and *S. repens* (S139). All were growing outside under shade cloth, in an acid sandy loam with much iron humus (pH 4.5). The plants were much more vigorous than the same species here, which are in a fairly neutral sand/compost mixture, but my plants are probably kept drier than Alan's. However, maybe acidity is necessary for these species, all of which are from relatively high rainfall areas.

#### New Members

Phil Jackson, 4 Dany Court, Fern Tree Gully 3156 (A).

And for the old members, a reminder that subs may be due. If you subs are due, as indicated below, please remit \$1.00 as soon as possible.

Your subs. for 1979-80 are/are not due.

/...over

### Propagation

Last year I divided up a *S. repens* into eight plantlets, during May, and all specimens continued to grow, even though the adventitious roots from the nodes had not reached the soil in some cases. This year I grasped the nettle and divided several species, cut off all old roots, (which left very little in some cases) and potted into sand/peatmoss type cutting mix. So far so good, no losses after three weeks, which augurs well. I have Eileen Croxford to thank for the suggestion of removing all old roots, even to the extent of treating the plants almost as cuttings - as long as some of the base of the plant is left - and it seems to work. The time of year, however, may not suit all areas, especially those which are colder and wetter than here; but if you have a greenhouse --

In addition to the W.A. Species, David Darbyshire has contributed a good pot of the Victorian *S. soboliferum*, which should yield a number of specimens for distribution. Most members seem to have *S. graminifolium* in one or more of its many forms, but not all of them have been properly described. So this year please write down all details (floral etc.) of your *S. graminifolium*, including habitat area if known, and send them to me.

I have been sending copies of this newsletter to other regions and study groups in response to Janet Closs' suggestion last year, but the response has been very poor. This will be the last newsletter distributed other than to members, and the Victorian Region, which supported the reciprocal arrangement financially.

Richard Davidson.