

**Association of Societies for Growing Australian Plants**  
**Native Succulents Study Group      Newsletter No.2 14/12/04**

Hi everyone I have been a bit slow getting around to this newsletter. First of all I would like to wish each and every one of you, and your families all the best for Xmas and the New Year. First of all I would like to request some help in running this group, I really need someone to look after membership and finances. I work full time and will be studying part time next year; I also have a 1000 plant collection and garden to look after. If no assistance is forthcoming I will be forced to close the group. Also some help with articles for the Newsletter would be appreciated. This month I thought I might cover some of our native succulent *Asclepiads*; maybe we can start some discussion on whether they should actually be classed as Succulent. Some comments on the newsletter would also be appreciated as well.

The first *Asclepiad* I thought we may take a look at is *Sarcostemma viminale* this *Sarcostemma* comes in two subspecies one is *australe* the other *brunonianum*. I am not 100% sure about this but usually subspecies *australe* is a more upright form and subspecies *brunonianum* is usually found hanging out of trees. *Sarcostemmas* seem to very variable and have different Geographical forms depending on the area they are from. One of the most interesting of these is a dwarf form of *Sarcostemma australe* from the St George district of South Western Queensland. It is believed that the majority of these plants were destroyed in the wild, due to the widening of the road by the main roads. Other Native species of *Sarcostemma* are *Sarcostemma esculentum* and *Sarcostemma brevipedicellatum*.



Sarcostemma viminale subspecies australe Dwarf form from St George.

Next Dischidias are an interesting group of plants from the tropics. At present I have two in cultivation, one being *Dischidia nummularia* and an unnamed species from the Iron Range in Northern Queensland. Other species of *Dischidia* include *Dischidia major*, *littoralis*, *ovata*. Of these *Dischidia major* or *rafflesiana* also known as rattlepods is an anthouse plant, with ants living in the hollow leaves. All *Dischidias* come from the tropics.

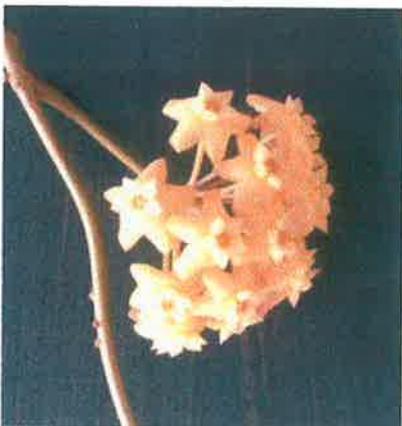


Dischidia nummularia



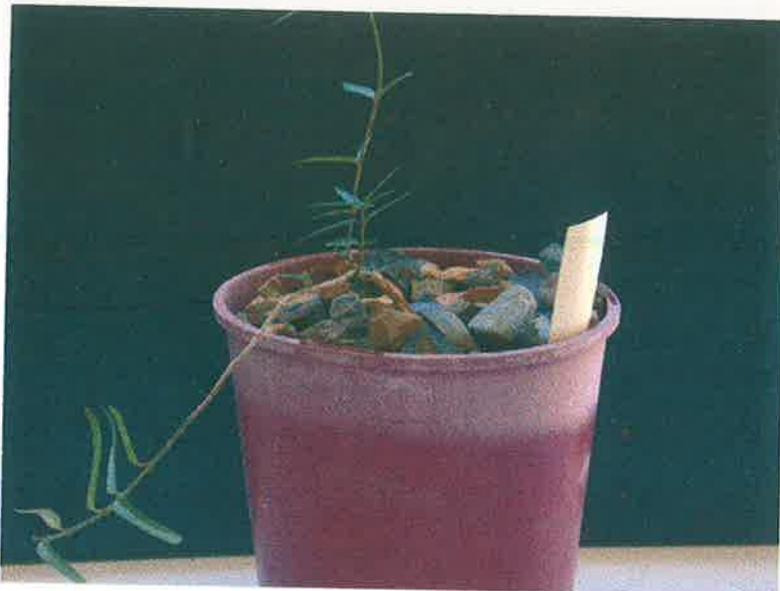
Dischidia Sp Iron Range

Now onto one of our more well known groups of Native plants the Hoyas. I suppose the main debate is; are all Hoyas succulent or not? I would say not in the strictest sense of the word but they sure are nice to collect. Anyway the main succulent species we have in Australia is *Hoya australis*. This plant is very widespread in the wild and seems to very variable over its distribution. Some forms being sought after by collectors. I recently found a specimen growing on Mt Larcom near Gladstone; this plant has very large leaves. Here is a chance for some comment which Australian Hoyas do you think qualify as succulent?



Hoya potsii (nicholsonae)

Next a group of plants that need some study as some of these plants are tuberous or may be grown as a Caudiciform. These are the Marsdenias; I have three growing at present *Marsdenia lissae*, *rostrata* and *viridiflora*. I plant to grow these plants to see if they are indeed tuberous. Of the three the only one that seems to be tuberous at present is *viridiflora*, but as the others were grown from cuttings rather than from seed it may be too soon to make a judgment. One *Marsdenia* that does get a large tuber is *Marsdenia australis*. I think all these plants need to be examined more closely to see if they could be classed as Native succulents or not.



*Marsdenia viridiflora*

Another plant which is reported to be tuberous, and may be a succulent plant is *Secamone elliptica* I have yet acquire one to find out. Also we have a Native *Ceropegia* from Northern Qld along with *Brachystelmas*, *Tylophoras* and a number of *Cynanchums* all of which may be classed as succulent. It may also depend on the conditions under which the plant is growing. Last year I found a *Cynanchum* growing on a piece of driftwood on a beach, this plant had extremely succulent

leaves, however; the cutting I have growing at home has normal leaves and I now think it may be *Cynanchum carnosum*.