

Association of Societies For Growing Australian Plants
Thysanotas And Related Genera Study Group Newsletter Number 3

c/o Andrew Geering
Department of Plant Pathology
Waite Institute
Glen Osmond 5064 S.A.

This letter is long overdue; sorry folks. Some reminders to members of the study group and then comments on germination of seed. Summer to early Autumn is the main flowering period of Thysanotas. Generally, species in warmer habitats tend to flower in Spring, those in cooler habitats tend to flower in Summer. If possible, when bushwalking, could you keep an eye out for fringed lilies- the best time to see flowers is usually before noon. Photographs (particularly colour slides) are most welcome and we need details of habitat, the whole plant, the flower and so on. Good luck with your searches.

We are still hoping for some Murchisonia to come our way. If anyone gathers seed or knows if there are specimens from which we can gather information, we would love to hear from you. I would like to see some preserved (not dried) roots (collected from live plants, preserved in 50% methylated spirits, 50% water).

Germination of seed. So far we have data on the germination of Thysanotas dichotomus, T. juncifolius, T. multiflorus and T. patersonii; Arthropodium milleflorum and A. minus; Dichopogon strictum and D. sp.; Caesia vittata and a plant sold to me as Arthropodium cirratum.

For all of Thysanotas, the data in Australian Plants is essentially correct. We have found that good germination of viable seed occurs in a wide range of temperature conditions with no pretreatment of seed necessary.

For C. vittata, our seed source did not readily germinate and so we cannot be sure. It appears that cooler temperatures are necessary (we used 14-16C) for germination, but even then, some 3-5 weeks elapsed before less than 5% of our seeds germinated. There was no response to gibberellic acid (G.A.4), washing the seed for 24 hours, a cold pretreatment or soaking overnight in a mild detergent. I suspect we have a poor batch of seed but we have no way of telling.

For all Arthropodium and Dichopogon tested so far, seed germinates readily at 14-16C (80-90% in most cases within 21 days) but does not germinate at 20C. No pretreatment is necessary.

All of the seedlings transplanted easily, though I waited until they were at least 2 weeks old. Also, all seem to produce a contractile root

that, in effect, pulls the crown into the soil. Care must be taken to ensure that you transplant your seedling at the same depth as it was in your seedling tray. I might remind you too that snails and slugs devastate the plants. I've had 20 seedlings mown off in one night, never to return. Seedlings may flower in the second year, but some seedlings of Arthropodium flowered within 12 months after we had germinated seed out of season and grown the plants in pots in glasshouses.

We hope for some feedback on your experiences with germination.

Happy gardening,

Peter McGee

Newsletter Editor.