

Association of Societies for Growing Australian Plants

*Thysanotas* and Related Genera Study Group Newsletter Number 4

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Last newsletter I discussed germination of seed and as in response, several members wrote mentioning their successs and failures. For all the letters, our thanks. There appear to be a couple of problems that need to be addressed.

(1) Germination of seed

Make sure that you treat the sand/peat germination potting mix to remove the damping-off fungi. I place my moistened 70% sand, 30% peat mix in a tray and put it into an oven preheated to 200C for 30 minutes, then remove the tray. I only water with town water, never rainwater. I always keep my seedling trays above ground level. Taking these precautions, I rarely have damping-off.

I keep my trays covered with a glass sheet, in the shade in a cool corner, until the seeds germinate. I then transplant after about 2-4 weeks directly into the ground. I use enormous quantities of snail pellets and I weed only by cutting off the shoots so as to allow mycorrhizal connections to develop. Goodness knows how good my system is because I am still developing the technique.

My previous comments on germination seem to be quite relevant.

(2) Transplanting larger plants

There are two sections here, one for *Thysanotas* and one for *Arthropodium* & *Dichopogon*.

For *Thysanotas*, I always use non-sterile soil, that is, I dig up some soil from under some Eucalypts, mix it 50/50 with coarse sand and pot up the tubers or rhizomes. I then put a seedling of a small dicot such as a clover or a daisy into the pot. The companion plant is very important.

I have not yet had enough tubers to attempt dividing up the plants of *Thysanotas*, but I have attempted division with both *Arthropodium* and *Dichopogon*. With these two, single tubers will regenerate whole plants and flower within 12 months. The tuber needs some of the central tissue - rather like splitting up the hub of a spoked wheel - remove a portion of the hub with each spoke and the spoke will regenerate a whole wheel. For those who have handled Dahlias, the system is similar. I always sterilise my soil for *Dichopogon* and *Arthropodium*.

### (3) Fertilisation

With *Thysanotas*, fertilise the companion plants and it will be transferred through the mycorrhizas. I use about a teaspoon of long life slow release Osmocote or Nutricote per plant. *Arthropodium* and *Dichopogon* respond quite markedly to liquid and slow release fertilisers applied directly.

Andrew and I are helping to put together some information for *Australian Plants*. Hopefully the article will include a summary of our last few newsletters on the hows and whys of growing *Thysanotas* and related genera. The plan is to have the articles to Bill Payne in September. Hard work for us. Have you some methods that work?

Finally, to help with collation of information on *Thysanotas* and related species, a guideline for the recording of notes on the ecology and cultivation of these species has been provided.

Keep the comments flowing. Happy gardening,

Peter McGee

THYSANOTAS STUDY GROUP

GUIDE FOR RECORDS OF WILD SPECIMENS

NAME:

LOCATION ( DISTRICT, STATE, GRID REFERENCE):

RAINFALL (MM.):

HABITAT( E.G. MALLEE, DRY SCLEROPHYLL, WET SCLEROPHYLL, RAINFOREST):

SOIL DESCRIPTION (I.E. SOIL COLOUR, RELATIVE AMOUNT OF CLAY/SAND/HUMUS/  
LEAF LITTER):

MICROHABITAT I.E. TOPOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION (I.E. SPUR OR SLOPE OF A  
HILL,GULLY); SHADE/ SUN; DRAINAGE:

ASSOCIATED SPECIES:

MONTH OF FLOWERING:

ABUNDANCE:

DEGREE OF HUMAN DISTURBANCE (I.E. GRAZED OR CULTIVATED AGRICULTURAL  
LAND, ROADSIDE, VIRGIN BUSH):

OTHER NOTES:

GUIDE FOR RECORDS OF GARDEN SPECIMENS

NAME:

LOCATION (SUBURB/TOWN, CITY, STATE):

RAINFALL (NATURAL PLUS INDICATION OF TIMING AND FREQUENCY OF ARTIFICIAL  
WATERING):

SOIL DESCRIPTION (INCLUDING DETAILS OF MODIFICATIONS E.G. FERILISER USAGE,  
RAISED BED, MULCHING):

WHERE PLANT OBTAINED (I.E. NURSERY, HOME PROPAGATED, TRANSPLANTED, SELF  
PROPAGATED):

PLANT USAGE IN GARDEN (E.G. ROCKERY PLANT, MASS DISPLAY):

PESTS AND DISEASES (INCLUDING NOTES ON GENERAL THRIFTINESS):

MONTH OF FLOWERING (INCLUDING LENGTH OF FLOWERING ):

FROST TOLERANCE:

SHADE/SUN:

LIFESPAN:

ASSOCIATED SPECIES:

OTHER NOTES: