

WALLUM and COASTAL HEATHLAND

STUDY GROUP

UPDATE - JUNE 1996

There has not been any great advance in the general cultivation of our Wallum species in the past twelve months. Reports of success from members, and others involved in trialling these plants, still show that they are very difficult, to say the least. So most of us still feel that preservation of Wallum habitats and communities, is the only way to ensure that these beautiful flowers have a future. However, we all know that preserving what remains of the Wallum is easier said than done.

My own propagation efforts have been small, due to a very busy year, and have had only scant success. From seed I have grown Callistemon pachyphyllus and Leptospermum liversidgei, and have one survivor from attempts to propagate Leptospermum semibaccatum. I have been trying a few cuttings:

<u>Sprengeia sprengeioides</u>	1 still hopeful
<u>Epacris obtusifolia</u>	no success yet
<u>Homoranthus virgatus</u>	2 looking good
<u>Hibbertia stricta</u>	1 struggling
" <u>linearis</u>	1 good, 1 maybe
" <u>vestita</u> (Marcoola)	1 looking good

Conospermum taxifolium which was collected (a plant) at Marcoola in 1993, has self-seeded in the garden, near the parent plant. I potted up one seedling into ordinary potting mix, as a trial, it grew a bit, but died during the big wet in May. Was it the mix, or too much wet?

Collected seed of Leptospermum semibaccatum of the two relocated (Marcoola) plants after they flowered quite well. Seed capsules stay on plants in a green condition for several months, then suddenly dry, open and release seed. Luckily I caught the last lot just in time, so must try more of that species.

Also collected a lot of seed from Sprengeia sprengeioides (Marcoola plants), but haven't had time yet to try these seeds, or many of the others I've collected to date.

Tried to germinate Patersonia fragilis, a smaller species than P. sericea, but has much larger seeds. Also Goodenia stelligera and some others, in an open (natural?) situation, in a seed box where they received sun and rain, but only had success with Callistemon pachyphyllus and Leptospermum liversidgei under these conditions.

The cuttings of Hibbertia linearis were taken from a good form which came from the Marcoola area, and which grows into a small neat shrub under 1 metre, and flowers prolifically in Spring. It would make a good garden subject, as would a very robust form of Hibbertia vestita, also from Marcoola.

In fact, this area, which is now going under houses, was an exceptional example of Wallum vegetation, and it is a tragedy that it has been lost as a research resource. But this is what is happening to our Wallum areas, and we can do nothing about it.

Caloundra City Council is now growing Wallum species in their nurseries, and getting some plants out into the community. But it is a limited range, and I don't know if they are receiving any feedback, as to the success or failure of the plants being grown in ordinary gardens. I have bought and planted Dodonaea rupicola, a rare species of a local Hop Bush, Patersonia sericea, Zieria laxiflora, Dillwynia floribunda, Phebalium woombye - all still alive, but have only been in the garden since March, so it is early days yet.

When preparing some plants of Calytrix tetragona for a stall for the Redcliffe and District S.G.A.P., I tried the tip-cuttings, but haven't had much success. Study Group member from Toorbul, Dot Brown, lives in original Wallum country, and has success with Calytrix, Phebalium and others, as well as Flannel Flowers, seed of which she simply scatters around her garden.

Another member, presently in Victoria but planning to move to the Sunshine Coast, has been very successful with most of the seeds she received from me last August.

Plants relocated from the Marcoola area in 1993 are showing varied results. Banksia robur is doing very well, Callistemon pachyphyllus keeps flowering, but Strangea linearis, Dillwynia floribunda, Pultenaea paleacea, Villarsia exalata all seem to be "growing backwards", and I have lost 2 Pultenaea paleacea. Mirbelia rubiifolia flowered, set seed, the plant appeared to die off, but revived briefly, before finally dying. Xanthorrhoea fulva, from Marcoola and Bribie Island, have flowered, produced seed, and increased the number of heads in the clumps. Homoranthus virgatus looks well and is budding for this year, while Haemodorum tenuifolium - Bloodroot - has flowered twice so far and set seed, in "captivity".

Of 2 Melaleuca thymifolia plants from Emu Swamp (among plants rescued with permission from the Transport Dept.), one flowers more prolifically than the other, although both are healthy specimens.

Plants have been rescued and collected from various places - Marcoola and the Coolum/Peregian area, Ningi and Bribie Island - with permission from owners/developers, and relocated in modified gardens. This way we can monitor their progress, and collect seed and take cuttings.

Acacia ulicifolia, Prickly Moses, from Bribie Island is very fine-leaved, while a Peregian form has broader foliage, but both are now flowering, as is Acacia suaveolens, grown from seed collected by a Study Group member.

Two Aotus lanigera from Ningi are now both dead, but seed was collected from the last one to die, and I have a smaller plant, grown from seed I obtained from Peregian. Some seed has been sent to a member of the S.G.A.P. Armidale group in New South Wales, this group being a member body.

Planted out a Bossiaea heterophylla a few months ago, it looked quite happy and sent up extra stems, then died quickly in the May wet (33 inches of rain in a week and a $\frac{1}{2}$). Obviously didn't appreciate all that sudden moisture.

I have a Persoonia virgata, Fine-leaved Geebung, which is tall and very sparse, but it flowers and produces fruits. I must have collected some fruits and planted the seed, as I have 6 mystery seedlings which look like Persoonias, in a pot. I must confess that I am often lax in keeping my records, but I like surprises now and again.

So I picked up some fruits/seeds from beneath the prostrate form of Persoonia virgata from Marcoola, and planted 12 seeds, hoping that they might be successful. This is an interesting find, as to date I have seen the prostrate plants only at Marcoola and at the Peregian Environmental Park.

Several plants which I brought home back in early 1992, from Bribie Island, and in late 1992 from Emu Swamp (pre Motorway completion) have now passed on, but 2 plants of a small Leucopogon, and a Leucopogon lanceolatus var. gracilis are still growing strongly and flowering each year.

Eriostemon myoporoides subsp. queenslandicus is difficult to establish from cuttings, but relocated from Marcoola, have been growing and flowering well.

Boronias are another story, as they definitely prefer their natural habitat, and must have very specific requirements, whether it be soils or associations with bacterias or fungus in the soil. You can "rescue" them, but they show no gratitude whatever, and linger on for a year or two. Often tiny scale attacks them, and they gradually lose their vigour, and simply die. This is a pity, as Boronias are just so beautiful, and would be a wonderful addition to any garden. I am very concerned for the future of one particular species - Boronia safrolifera, the Safrole Boronia. We have seen it at only two locations - Bribie Island and Ningi, always in quite wet swamp conditions. At Ningi, the area will eventually become housing, and on Bribie Island, this lovely plant is to lose out to a golf course for that wonderful development which is always being glowingly advertised on T.V. - Pacific Harbour! This Boronia does not appear anywhere on the Sunshine Coast, so obviously has a limited distribution. But its near relations, B. falcifolia and B. rosmarinifolia, the first a Wallum wetland species, the other of the nearby woodlands, probably won't fare much better, as development overtakes their natural habitat. Just more casualties of progress.

Meanwhile, there are people who are still trying to grow the Wallum wildflowers, but it is going to take longer than we have the time, before the resource vanishes.