

S.G.A.P. ACACIA STUDY GROUP
NEWSLETTER NO. 1
MARCH 1968

Robert Coveny
4 Churchill Crescent
Concord NSW 2137

To all members, both old and new, greetings from your new leader. I trust our association will be both happy and rewarding.

Letters have been received from the following members –

Mr D Perrin, 24 Pitt St, Springwood, NSW 2777
Mrs E Chandler, 20 Honiton Ave, Carlingford NSW 2118
Mrs E Cumpston, 24 Holmes Crescent, Campbell, Canberra, ACT 2601
Miss M Pearce, “Dunolly”, Warne St, Katoomba, NSW 2780
Mr W H Payne, 250 Picnic Point Rd, Picnic Point, NSW 2213
Mr N O’Donnell, Albion Cres, Greensborough, Victoria 3088
Mrs O McHaffie, “Carawatha”, Berringa Rd, Park Orchards, Victoria 3114
Mrs J B Stiller, “Hilldale”, Nagoorin, Queensland 4680
Mrs E Durbridge, Pt Lookout, N. Stradbroke Is, via Brisbane Qld 4184
Mr & Mrs J Simmons, 30 Ravenswood Rd, Launceston, Tasmania 7250
Mr Clive Fisher, “Carinya”, Old Bona Vista Rd, Warragul, Vic 3820
Miss P Males, 13 Gelding St, Dulwich Hill, NSW 2203
Mr H L White, Nat Library of Australia, Processing Branch, Canberra, ACT 2600
Mons J Marnier-Lapostolle, 91 Boulevard, Haussman, Paris VIII E France
Dr C Biscard Jeppe, PO Box 7240, Johannesburg, republic of S Africa
Brigadier Officer, Olinda, Victoria
Mr I G Holliday, Tranmere, South Australia

The Newsletter will be produced quarterly, not monthly, as previously stated. All letters will be dealt with in the next issue.

Mr Des Nelson of Alice Springs, in reply to a letter from me supplied the following descriptions of Central Australian Acacias –

Acacia aneura “Mulga”, found over most of Central Australia, is interesting on account of its great diversity of form, it dominates large areas between Alice Springs and Tennant Creek. Mulga also makes a good hardy garden specimen.

Acacia calcicola, a greyish small tree found near Hermannsburg, also near Kulgera, along with *A. graniticola* which it resembles.

A. dictyophleba, one of the shrub Acacias, occurring in the red sandy spinifex areas. This and some other of the desert species, such as *A. maitlandii* (syn *A. patens*) have viscous leaves.

A. estrophiolata, “Ironwood”, the largest of our Acacias. Scattered over the Centre, but mostly found on old alluvial flats. Notable for its fine soft foliage.

A. farnesiana “Mimosa Bush”. Found in some of our usually dry creeks, this thorny shrub is unusual in having truly pinnate leaves, all other local acacias having phyllodes, which replace the true leaves found only in the seedling stage. This is the only Centre Acacia which is indigenous to other dry parts of the world eg parts of India, Middle East and Northern Africa. It seems oddly out of place in the centre of Australia.

A. strongylophylla, “Skeleton wattle”, a spindly erect shrub of about 6 ft, armed with thorns, but bearing very beautiful large tubular flowers. It grows in sheltered places such as Standley Chasm and Palm Valley and is a worthy subject for propagation.

A. georginae "Gidgee or Gidyea", found to the east of Alice Springs and around Trepina Gorge and Loves Creek. The seed of this species is unlike the hard rounded seed of all other acacias, being large, flat and with a very thin, almost papery cover. Seed very easily germinated, which is also unusual, as all other acacias require heat treatment or mechanical (?) damage before successful germination. Yet another unusual feature of this very drought resistant small tree, is the offensive smell given off when flowering or when wet from rain. Hardest wood of all Acacias, it burns with such great heat, I have seen a wood stove turn red hot on top, when filled with Gidgee wood. They attain a great age.

A. kempeana "Witchetty bush", a woody but quite attractive many branched shrub, which prefers calcareous or limestone areas. Found in localized parts, Witchetty Bush is well worthy of wider cultivation, as it bears masses of spike type blooms of a pleasing bright yellow colour.

A. ligulata "Umbrella bush". A beautiful shrub of the red desert sands bearing a great profusion of globular bright yellow blooms.

A. salicina. A small tree with pendulous foliage and whitish blooms. At times seen on gilgais or water collecting depressions. It is not very common in the Centre.

A. murrayana, "Colony Wattle", so named because of its habit of making small stands or colonies. A shrub to small tree, often with pink smooth bark, this species bears beautiful bright golden yellow blooms. Scattered in sandy and sandy alluvial areas, good specimens are seen a few miles south of Alice Springs through Heavitree Gap.

A. sessiliceps. A small neat shrub, about 4ft high, with needle like foliage, somewhat resembling one of our local Hakeas. Scattered on alluvial flats, not very common, it bears creamy white sparse blooms.

A. spondylophylla, an unusual low growing shrub, rarely more than 3 feet high, but with an odd dense flattened crown, up to a yard or more across. The flowers are bright yellow spike type, the foliage has an odour like curry powder. Not common. Sometimes found at the foot of ranges, such as the Hann Range, about 70 miles north of Alice Springs.

A. tetragonophylla, "Dead Finish", a straggling, rather untidy large straggly shrub, with needle-pointed thin phyllodes, but nice bright yellow flowers. This species is found sparsely scattered in most soil types and is very hardy.

A. victoriae, "Acacia bush", a large dense bush which bears a great profusion of creamy blossoms. To the south of Alice Springs, just through Heavitree Gap is a large solid stand of this species, which is very easily cultivated.

The Group Memorial to your late leader, Dr Allan C Keane, in the David G Stead Wildlife Foundation reserve at "Wirrimbirra", Bargo, NSW, is to be opened on April 27th. I hope to be present at this ceremony, note what Acacias have been planted, and give a report to members in the next issue.

Would all members please forward to me any specimens available, Acacias bearing flowers, and in due course, mature seed-bearing pods of the same. Where more than one specimen is sent, it is suggested that a numbered record be kept, so that seed pods can be correctly certified with corresponding specimen. These may be either bush or garden subjects. Please state, if known, whether native to the area.

To prepare specimen, place between two sheets of newspaper, place an object on top to press, change paper daily until thoroughly dry. Place between two sheets of cardboard for posting.

These specimens are required for the purpose of correct certification.

I am in the process of producing a check-list of Acacias of all states, giving synonyms and states of distribution, and in some cases, approximate height of plant.

If you have any problems or questions, please write early for inclusion in the next issue.

Would members wishing to receive the Newsletter regularly, please send 50 cents to cover the cost of stationery and postage for the current year.