

S.G.A.P. ACACIA STUDY GROUP
NEWSLETTER NO. 16
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It looks as though no one wants this nice cushy job I have as leader of the Group. If you have not seen anything about my wish to resign in your State Newsletter will you please ask your editor to publicise the fact.

MEMBERSHIP

Mr Wyld of Derbyshire, England, has resigned. Royce Raleigh has changed his address to 41 Queens Parade, Burwood,, Vic 3125. We have one new member – Brendan Lynch, Box 583, Southport, Qld 4215.

FINANCE

No space to report this time.

SEED LIST

	<u>ADDITIONS</u>	<u>DELETIONS</u>
<i>acinacea</i> (pros)	<i>hemsleyi</i>	<i>alata</i>
<i>assimilis</i>	<i>jucunda</i>	<i>auriculiformis</i>
<i>aulacocarpa</i>	<i>longiphyllodinea</i>	<i>comans</i>
<i>bidentata</i>	<i>megacephala</i>	<i>cuneata</i>
<i>botrycephala</i> (Katoomba)	<i>obtusifolia</i>	<i>cuthbertsonii</i>
<i>calyculata</i>	<i>parvipinnula</i>	<i>echinula</i>
<i>confluens</i>	<i>plectocarpa</i>	<i>glaucocarpa</i>
<i>duriuscula</i>	<i>stipuligera</i>	<i>horridula</i>
<i>estrophiolata</i>		<i>retinodes</i> v. <i>oraria</i>
		<i>rostellifera</i>
		<i>obliquistigma</i>
		<i>pyrifolia</i>
		<i>signata</i>

The *acinacea* prostrate seed comes from Mr Sharpe (see N/L 14) and Mrs Cook. Mr Sharpe's plant was 2m diameter and only 8 cm high at 2½ years. Mrs Cook's is 2.75m diameter and 25 cm high.

A. botrycephala (Katoomba). Seed from Mrs Dark. A beautiful medium shrub, with deep gold flowers. This species grows in all Eastern States, but I don't know whether it occurs in other states with deep gold flowers. Here in NSW the coastal form which is very common is always pale creamy-yellow and the rich golden one starts somewhere on the way up to the Blue Mountains and is then found in abundance, while the paler form becomes less common.

A. megacephala has a fairly restricted habitat in an area 10 miles east of Geraldton and extending eastwards towards Mullewa. This is an outstanding acacia to about 2 metres, with bipinnate leaves, one pair of pinnae only and flower heads 1.5cm diameter. Its nearest relatives are *A. pulchella* and *A. lasiocarpa*. Some forms of *A. megacephala* have large very sharp spines, others do not. Seed from Gary Phillips.

I still need seed of *A. floribunda*. Quite a number of members have this very beautiful tree (I have 4 myself) but none seem to set seed. Even Myer O'Donnell's which has been a regular producer in the past, failed to set seed last year.

Please be sure to collect and forward seed of anything you have which is not already on the seed list.

You'll be pleased to know that at the request of Victoria SGAP, I was able to supply seed of 26 species (4 metres and under) for them to sell at the Annual Exhibition.

The name *A. cyanophylla* has been discontinued, as this species is considered to be conspecific with *A. saligna*.

I have seed of the following, enough for one or two people only.

First come, first served:- *A. cambagei*, *A. coriacea*, *A. flocktoniae*, *A. hispidula*, *A. juniperina*, *A. maidenii*, *A. trinervata*.

NEWS FROM MEMBERS

Good news from SA. Mrs Harvey has started a native plant nursery.

Ross Macdonald's "new" garden looks as though it has been there for ever, instead of a brief two years. Any minute from now he will be supplying me with seed again.

Mrs Schotte (Lower Blue Mountains) reports that she has been very successful with *A. conferta*, a beautiful shrub with small grey-green phyllodes crowding the stem and brilliant large ball flowers. Native to NSW and Qld, but Mrs Oxnam of Perth wrote me some years ago that she had a beauty.

Mrs Schotte's *A. lineata* is 1.5m high and 4m wide, a beautiful shrub, hers with arching branches. Native to SA, Vic, NSW and Qld. Comments please, I thought this was usually an upright shrub?

From Mrs Schotte again, her "prostrate" *A. aculeatissima* is about 1m high and 2m across. It stayed flat for the first few months but is now sending branches straight up. Planted amongst other shrubs, she wonders whether this has something to do with its vertical growth. Comments please.

Vic Jacobs took umbrage at my remarks about his dwarf *A. decurrens* and wants me to point out that at 5 years old when the normal *A. decurrens* would be 25-28 metres, the "dwarf" is still only 2.5m. This is really quite remarkable, and if you happen to want something with a 6m span it would, of course, be just the job.

Graeme Lees has had outstanding success with *A. glaucoptera*. His soil is fairly heavy, which of course suits it. It's known as "Clay Wattle". His best plant is better than any I saw growing in nature in WA. As far as I know he is the only member outside WA to succeed with this species. I germinated 10 out of 10. All survived. Planted out 5 and gave away 5 (including one to Graeme). But after a very promising start they succumbed to poor soil and too much water. All lower phyllodes shrivelled and went grey. The plants are still there, one even flowered last year but they're in the same category as the old racehorse which is put out to grass to save it from the knacker.

And now some comments from Mrs Chandler, who works closely with Thistle Stead for and at Wirrimbirra. "*A. loxophylla* v. *nervosa* is a perfect all-purpose garden shrub, very neat habit of growth; very beautiful in flower, solitary flowers right down the many stems. Our plants (about a dozen of them) all the same size and shape in various positions, about 1.3m high, stems upright, not spreading. WA."

"*A. strigosa* v. *brevifolia*. Sub-shrub under 60cm, dainty and floppy, long flowering period, about 3 months, beautiful little cylindrical spikes right down to ground level. We found that only the late flowers set seed, tiny paper thin pods each containing up to 8 seeds. WA."

And here are some small acacias, all likely to be difficult, I'm afraid, which I recommend for trial. There is plenty of seed of some and very little of others. Sizes given are average in nature. What they will do in other habitats is one of the many things we have to try to find out.

I would stress, however, that with these difficult species it is not a bit of use treating seed, dumping 10 or so together in a pot and hoping for the best. All these small acacias are delicate and fragile in infancy. The only way to give them a fair go (and particularly as seed is so difficult to obtain) is to treat and plant each seed individually in 2½ inch propagating pot, keep it adequately but not over-watered, in a sunny but sheltered position, and as soon as the cotyledons have opened up, tip the small pot upside down and transfer seedling and soil intact into the container in which you intend it to grow.

Having done this, treat it with care and commonsense. Do not over water, do not allow to dry out. Do not allow to be swamped by heavy rain. Increase hours of sunshine gradually. Do not coddle. Be sure that the young plants become used to wind, sun and rain in moderation, controlled by you when necessary. If you do this you can't fail to raise at least a couple of plants out of every dozen seeds.

A. biflora, WA. Grows among low shrub in sand or sandy loam, inland 15" rainfall, to about 1m. Small triangular phyllodes with small hook, rigid, pungent, dull dark green. Ball flowers, brilliant yellow.

A. bidentata, WA. Sometimes prostrate but can be up to 30cm high and 1m wide. Similar habitat to preceding. Small "rounded triangular" phyllodes, cream flowers, ball type.

A. continua, SA, NSW. Inland species, 1m x 2m. Narrow almost terete foliage about 2cm long continuous with stem. Bright gold flowers, 10 - 17" rainfall. Covers whole hillsides in Gawler Ranges and common in parts of Flinders Ranges.

A. drummondii, WA. Fairly easy. Shrub to 2 metres. Extremely attractive bipinnate foliage. Deep gold spike flowers 2½ to 3 cm. Prefers half shade.

A. gilbertii, WA. Mrs Simmons has grown this most successfully. She describes it as having bipinnate foliage, cascading branches, golden ball flowers. The shrub is somewhat similar in habit to the preceding but of course it has the ball flower. Also prefers half shade.

A. glandulicarpa, Vic. Restricted habitat in the Dimboola/Nhill district. Attractive shrub to 1.5m. Phyllodes broadly elliptical up to 1.3cm long with lower margin curved and undulate. Golden ball flowers.

A. lanigera, Vic, NSW, Qld. Shrub to 1.5m. Phyllodes 2-3cm long, tapered at both ends. Young foliage pubescent, hence the name "woolly". This is one I mentioned having seen on my trip to Burrendong on a road between Wellington and Orange. It was quite magnificent and less than 1m high. Brilliant yellow ball flowers.

A. loxophylla var. *nervosa*. As described by Mrs Chandler.

A. megacephala. As described on page 1.

A. multispicata, WA. This is one of the most outstanding shrubs I saw during my trip. Common over hundreds of miles in parts of southwest WA. Many stemmed, fairly dense upright growth to about 2m high. Phyllodes terete 1½ to 2½ cm. Its natural habitat is open country 15 - 18" rainfall, pH 7½.

A. latipes, WA. Inhabits roughly the same localities as preceding. It has short curved pungent phyllodes, and again, at flowering time is a solid mass of gold. It sometimes achieves a dense compact rounded growth; but in other instances has long arching branches giving it a very graceful appearance which belies the vicious pointed phyllodes.

HOMEWORK

On the subject of small acacias suitable for garden cultivation, I feel we have made little progress in this direction despite the distribution of literally thousands of seeds. I know they are difficult. I've raised and lost hundreds myself since March, 1971. But from what I was able to observe on my travels I would say unhesitatingly that those of us who live in the Sydney region face many more difficulties in trying to raise native flora than do people in any other part of Australia I visited. So I think it's time we did a check up on all the small acacias we are growing to see just what progress has been made. A Report Sheet is enclosed and this time I'd like to hear about the dead ones as well as the live ones, no matter what their age. Furthermore, if you have had seed and not raised a single plant I'd like to know briefly whether they did not germinate, or died before planting out, or after planting out. Not a detailed report on each seed but something like:- "5 out of 10 germinated, 3 died in pots, two lasted a few months in ground then died." And give what you suppose is the reason, ie "too dry, too wet, obviously not adaptable" etc. I think it's fair to apply this last label to plants which look weak and leggy right from the start and never develop any sign of joie de vivre!

So this is the list, plus any other small ones you may have:-

<i>acinacea</i> & <i>a. prostrate</i>	<i>ericifolia</i>	<i>merrellii</i>
<i>aculeatissima</i> & <i>a. prostrate</i>	<i>enterocarpa</i>	<i>mitchellii</i>
<i>amblygona</i> & <i>a. prostrate</i>	<i>flexilis</i>	<i>mooreana</i>
<i>bidentata</i>	<i>fragilis</i>	<i>multispicata</i>
<i>biflora</i>	<i>genistifolia (diffusa)</i>	<i>pulchella</i>
<i>brownii</i>	<i>gilbertii</i>	<i>rhetinocarpa</i>
<i>buxifolia</i>	<i>glandulicarpa</i>	<i>rhigiophylla</i>
<i>celastrifolia</i>	<i>glaucoptera</i>	<i>rupicola</i>
<i>collettioides</i>	<i>gonophylla</i>	<i>sedifolia</i>
<i>complanata</i> □	<i>gunnii</i>	<i>shuttleworthii</i>
<i>conferta</i>	<i>heteroclita</i>	<i>spathulata</i>
<i>continua</i>	<i>horridula</i>	<i>spinescens</i>
<i>cuneata</i>	<i>idiomorpha</i>	<i>stenoptera</i>
<i>decora</i>	<i>huegelii</i>	<i>sulcata</i>
<i>daviesioides</i>	<i>lanigera</i>	<i>taylorana</i>
<i>decipiens</i>	<i>lasiocarpa</i>	<i>tetragonophylla</i>
<i>dentifera</i>	<i>latipes</i>	<i>trigonophytlla</i>
<i>divergens</i>	<i>lineata</i>	<i>triptera</i>
<i>drummondii</i>	<i>loxophytlla v. nervosa</i>	<i>ulicifolia</i>
<i>echinula</i>	<i>menzelii</i>	<i>uncinata</i>

A few of those are not "small" but I want to check up on them. A little co-operation goes a long way. Please let's have yours!

Bye for now.

Inez Armitage