

S.G.A.P. ACACIA STUDY GROUP
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Dear Members

Welcome to new members:

Mrs D Price, 3 Hillcrest, Langland, Swansea West Glam SA3 PW Wales
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Thank you as well to those who have renewed their subscriptions. You will recall that all subs are due at 30 June each year. My thanks to those study groups and regions who have forwarded their newsletters. They are always very interesting.

MELBOURNE WILDFLOWER SHOW on 13th and 14th September at Ringwood Cultural Centre, Mines Road, Ringwood. The theme is a "Curious and Diverse Flora". The main aim of the show is to awaken public interest in our flora and to emphasise their place in landscaping. Your support and attendance would be much appreciated.

MEMBERS' NOTES

A letter from overseas member Dewi Price of Wales tells us that she has grown *A. alata*, *A. paradoxa* (syn *A. armata*), *A. myrtifolia*, *A. pravissima*, *A. riceana* and *A. wilhelmiana* in terra-cotta pots for some years. They are kept in an unheated south facing conservatory and were grown from seed. At the time of writing (May) only *A. paradoxa* had flowered but all had survived the harsh winters of 1985/86 although *A. alata* showed some signs of frost damage. I have sent several lots of seed to Dewi so I am sure we will hear more of her results as time goes on.

From Rockhampton, Eric Anderson has reported the progress of his Acacias. The following performed fairly well, but those marked with * were impressive:

<i>aulacocarpa</i>	<i>fimbriata</i>	* <i>pendula</i>
* <i>bancroftii</i>	* <i>glaucocarpa</i>	* <i>penninervis</i>
<i>cincinnata</i>	<i>holosericea</i>	* <i>podalyriifolia</i>
* <i>conferta</i>	* <i>juncifolia</i>	* <i>salicina</i>
* <i>decora</i>	* <i>leptostachya</i>	<i>simsii</i>
* <i>farnesiana</i>	* <i>macradenia</i>	* <i>umbellata</i>
<i>victoriae</i>		

Take note those of you who live in similar climatic zones!

In order to grow some of the inland wattles Eric has imported a small mound of sandy stony soil and *A. conferta* and *Acacia umbellata* are growing in that spot. The remainder are growing in a medium heavy textured grey clay which is about 120cm deep, pH7.5. Eric's objective with his "Acacia Arboretum" is to grow as many of the Acacias of Capricornia as possible. He feels that

it could involve up to 140 or so species but he is aiming for about 100 over the next five years. To date, he has about 30 species established. He has experienced almost as many fatalities for one reason or another, mostly unknown, except for a couple of lawnmower kills!

An interesting Acacia which Inez Armitage is growing at Kempsey, NSW, is *A. craspedocarpa*. It had a few flowers in January and February and was forming pods in May. It has unusual roundish silvery grey foliage and comes from dry inland WA. Another success is *A. semilunata* which is 3.5 years old and which flowered beautifully at its second attempt last year. It was full of buds in May. One healthy specimen of *A. mangium* is 2 years old and over 1m tall. It survived last winter in garden and hopefully it will come through this one too.

After putting in a dam Inez has an area of built up soil on three banks on which she has planted different Acacia species. She reports that they are maintaining their natural bushy shape instead of becoming leggy and open as they tended to do in other parts of the garden.

From Thomas Ross, West Germany – referring to potting mixes he says that he generally uses a mix of 50:50 peat and sand with sometimes granules of baked clay (like that used for hydroponics) or a lava added. The problem with lava is its relatively high content of calcium. At first Thomas was not aware of this and used the lava for wattles that do not tolerate alkaline soils with disastrous results (a lesson for all of us I think). He goes on to say that *A. cardiophylla* loved lava and *A. spectabilis* tolerated it, however *A. calamifolia* died, probably because of the lava, he thinks. He intends to experiment with a local product, a ground rock that forms a kind of clay when moist. This can be added to standard potting mix and provide different amounts of nutrients and minerals. For fertiliser he has been using a standard liquid fertiliser with trace elements with good results.

Townsville member Paul Brown is having a lot of trouble with longicorn beetles attacking his plants and he is hoping to do some study on them this year. With this in mind he would appreciate hearing from anyone who has experienced problems with them in other parts of Australia. It seems that this particular beetle has been having a devastating effect on acacias in Townsville for about 4 years, particularly with *A. hemsleyi* and the large increase in beetle population in that time seems to have co-incided with the increase in the number of that tree being grown after being popularized on TV by both the nurseries and SGAP (I must mention that there are more than one species of longicorn beetle).

CAR STICKER COMPETITION

I would like to encourage members to try their hands at designing a car sticker for ASGAP using an Acacia as its motif. I am sure you have read the conditions of entry in your regional newsletter by now. It would be a great outcome to have an Acacia design accepted. Entries should be in to Glenn Thomas in Brisbane by 31 January 1987.

PRUNING

Most native plants benefit from regular pruning usually carried out after flowering. This can be done at yearly or two-yearly intervals depending on the need of the bushes.

In their natural habitat plants are often subject to fires which can kill completely or kill back to their rootstocks which then re-shoot vigorously. The best flowering displays quite often follow fires. If no fire occurs over a long period plants tend to become leggy and sparse and lose their vigour. This can happen in the garden too if pruning is neglected (said the voice of experience!).

Pruning can be commenced in the nursery by pinching out the growing tip of the seedling. This will encourage branching from the base and the basis of a good bushy habit. Pruning regularly after flowering on older bushes as suggested will encourage new growth, good flowering and possibly prolonging the life of the plant.

One must remember that many Acacia species are happy to be cut back, some quite severely, but there are others which will not tolerate severe treatment and if cut back into the old wood will promptly die.

As a general rule it is thought advisable to delay pruning until after heavy frosts have gone and to leave any frost damaged material on the plant until after winter. New growth which usually follows pruning at this time can be cut again by frost with disastrous results.

GROWING LOCAL PLANTS

The main reasons as I see them:

1. Plants are already acclimatised to local soils and climatic conditions.
2. The desirability of preserving a possibly depleted local stock or placing in cultivation a rare and endangered species.
3. Bringing these plants and their potential to the attention of plant growers visiting your garden.
4. Encouraging local birds into your garden by providing local plants.

Growing plants which have adapted over a long period to your local soils and conditions does sound like good sense, doesn't it? More and more growers are becoming aware of the benefits to be derived from this approach to native plant growing.

Some really beautiful plants from our local area are often completely neglected by nurserymen and native plant growers. So often people hanker to grow the larger and more brightly coloured flowers from other places and other climates. Of course we are guilty of this too! However, some years ago we did begin to realize that some of our Tasmanian plants had wonderful potential. Since then we have collected cutting material and seeds of many of our local plants and now have quite a good collection of those best suited to our conditions.

Quite often plants are on the "rare and endangered" list and although not of great commercial horticultural interest it seems to me that there is good reasons for SGAP members to grow these plants in their gardens to help educate others and to ensure the plant's survival should they be at risk.

All these comments relate to Acacias as well as other plants, of course.

SIR JOSEPH BANKS NATIVE PLANT GARDEN, SYDNEY

An interesting request was received from a member of the Sutherland Group of SGAP NSW for recommendation of five different Acacias which I thought would fit several specialized spots in the garden. This was done and I hope to hear further progress of the area. Has any member who lives in the vicinity been actively involved with this project?

BOOKS

“PESTS DISEASES & AILMENTS OF AUSTRALIAN PLANTS”

by **David Jones and Rodger Elliot**

A 333 paged book specializing in the description and illustration of most known pests, diseases and ailments that can attack Australian plants and giving effective control with emphasis on natural rather than chemical alternatives. \$24.95.

MORE ON GROWING PLANTS IN POTS

(Extracted from Dept of Agriculture NSW Journal on “Native Plants for Growing in Containers” by G Lamont)

Potting soil containing components such as peat moss, pine bark, composted sawdust, perlite, vermiculite and coarse river sand provides a suitable root environment for natives. Most native plants grow very well in soilless mixes based on these components. It is suggested that mushroom compost be used sparingly because it may contain high levels of salts.

If you intend growing plants in containers for more than a year it is suggested that you avoid using readily decomposable material in the potting mix. Use of leaf mould and mushroom compost, for instance, may lead to compacting of the soil and reduced volume and aeration of mix. There is more benefit if it is used as surface mulch.

FERTILISING – when using 8-9 month release fertilizers the rate is approximately 3 grams (half teaspoon) of fertiliser per litre of potting mix, applied in spring.

WATTLES & WATTLE BARKS by J H Maiden

(Extract) The first shipment of tanning material (extract of bark) was made from Sydney to England in 1823. It seems two species were involved but their names were not mentioned.

In South Australia the extract was obtained by converting small branches, thinnings and tops, too small for stripping in the usual way, into a strong fluid extract called “tannage”. This contained water 60% and soluble tannin 38.2% from a sample taken from the first 80 ton shipment.

To obtain the extract the small branches etc on delivery to the factory were cut up into “chaff” by a machine with chisels revolving at high speed. Chips were then shovelled into wooden hoppers where they were thoroughly steamed and then pumped into an elevated tank. From there the fluid was allowed to flow on to evaporating sheets 30-40 feet long. This caused rapid evaporation into a thick treacly extract.

It was necessary at all stages of manufacture to prevent the tannage making contact with iron, so wooden vats and heat evaporation obtained from hot water or steam were used in all stages of manufacture.

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 Pine Rivers Soc for SGAP, c/o Mrs J M Sked, cnr Miles & Galvin Sts, Lawnton 4501

ACACIA STUDY GROUP NOTES

- A. pruinosa*
Q, NSW
Shrub to 2m tall, reddish branchlets & stems; leaves bipinnate, large leaflets; flowers bright yellow balls in late summer. Needs well drained sunny position.
- A. pubescens*
NSW
Shrub/small tree to 5m, hairy branchlets & bipinnate leaves; flowers lemon/yellow in racemes. Tolerant species for cool shady areas; grows well in nth. Tasmania.
- A. pubifolia*
sth Q
Tree to 8m, dark fissured bark; phyllodes elliptic 2-10cm long, many veins; flowers bright yellow spikes, Sep – Dec; pods felty narrow. Needs full sun, good drainage.
- A. pulchella*
s-w WA
Small prickly shrub to 2m tall; bipinnate leaves, 1-2 spines; flowers bright yellow balls spring. Needs full sun, good drainage, grows well in Tasmania.
- A. pustula*
Q
Tree to 12m; phyllodes thin 5-14.5cm long, mid rib & gland prominent; flowers bright yellow balls, racemes, July – Aug. Suited to warmer climates like Darling Downs.
- A. pycnantha*
SA, VIC, NSW
Tall shrub/small tree to 8m; phyllodes 7-20cm x 5-50mm; bright yellow balls, racemes, spring. Well known and grown.
- A. pyrifolia*
n-w WA
Blue-green leafed shrub, ovate phyllodes with long sharp point; bright yellow ball flowers, racemes; spiny stipules; suited to tropical areas.
- A. quadrilateralis*
NSW
Prickly shrub to 2m, narrow sharp pointed phyllodes 2-7cm long; flowers pale or yellow balls; found in coastal areas mid NSW, suited to sub-tropical areas.

<i>A. quadrimarginea</i> WA	Flat-topped bushy shrub or tree to 5m; phyllodes 6-9cm x 2-4mm curved spreading; flowers bright yellow spikes, July – March. Suited to hot dry regions, well drained soils.
<i>A. ramulosa</i> (across centre)	Tall grey-green bushy shrub/small tree to 3m; rounded narrow phyllodes 8-18cm long; flowers yellow spikes, spring; pods round. Grows in rocky well drained areas; drought & frost resistant in hotter areas; lime tolerant.
<i>A. redolens</i> s-w WA	Widely spreading mounded shrub to 4m with grey-green phyllodes, several veins; flowers yellow balls, short racemes; suited to coastal areas, lime tolerant; widely grown.
<i>A. restiacea</i> s-w WA	Slender wiry shrub to 1m with rush-like branches, mostly no leaves; bright yellow flowers, racemes, spring. Needs sunny well drained spot; grows well in north.
<i>A. retinodes</i> SA, VIC	Shrub/small tree to 8m, angular branchlets; phyllodes lanceolate 3-20cm x 3-15mm, mid-vein; flowers mid-yellow balls, racemes. Grown widely in gardens, both public and private.
<i>A. retivenia</i> WA, NT, w Qld	Usually densely hair slender shrub to 3m; phyllodes rounded, leathery, prominently net-veined; flowers bright yellow ball racemes or singly; pods broad, flat. Scattered distribution in northern areas in rocky well drained sites.
<i>A. rhetinocarpa</i> SA	Shrub to 1.5m, hairy branchlets; small oval phyllodes 2-5mm long; flowers bright yellow balls, singly. Pods sticky. Grows well drained sandy sites, tolerates limey soils.
<i>A. rhigiophylla</i> SA, NSW	Rigid spreading prickly shrub to 3m, linear sharp pointed phyllodes 1-2.5cm long, several nerves; bright yellow ball or oblong flowers usually twins. Occurs in dry well drained areas, will tolerate limey soils.
<i>A. rhodophloia</i> WA, NT	Shrub/small tree to 4m tall; minni ritchi bark; phyllodes rather stiff, sticky, many veined 2.5-10cm x 2-8mm; flowers balls to rods. Occurs in dry hot sandy or rocky areas.
<i>A. riceana</i> TAS	Bushy prickly shrub/small tree 3-10m high with pendulous branches; phyllodes rigid, sharp pointed, crowded; flowers pale, loose spikes. Grows in cool damp places especially in south.
<i>A. rigens</i> WA, SA, NSW, VIC	Variable spreading shrub, 2-3m or taller; phyllodes linear 3-13cm long, tough not snapping easily; flowers bright yellow balls, singles or twins, July – Dec. Pods loosely coiled. Useful for dry well drained warm areas.
<i>A. rivalis</i> SA, w NSW	Silvery leafed shrub/small tree 3-5m with drooping foliage; phyllodes linear-lanceolate 5-14cm long, mid-nerve; flowers yellow balls on hoary stalks, May – Nov. Found on stony hills of Flinders Ranges, should prove useful for dry country planting.
<i>A. rossiae</i> s-w WA	Open, willowy sticky shrub to 1.5m; phyllodes linear crowded, erect; flowers large bright yellow balls, clustered at tops of branchlets, spring. Pods rough surface. Found in hot dry sandy country.
<i>A. rostelifera</i> WA	Variable blue-green shrub/small tree to 5m. Phyllodes 5-10cm with either one or two nerves; flowers yellow balls in racemes. Hardy plant suited to coast and inland areas.
<i>A. rothii</i> Q, NT	Tree to 10m with rough dark bark; curved phyllodes 15-25cm x 10-20mm, several veins; bright yellow balls in racemes; pod flat woody, veined. Common in NT restricted to Cape York in Qld and suited to similar climates.

- A. rotundifolia*** Should probably be included with *A. acinacea*.
- A. rubida***
NSW, VIC Tall shrub/small tree 2-10m tall; bipinnate leaves often persisting; phyllodes straight, curved 6-20cm x 8-25mm; flowers small yellow balls in racemes, Aug – Oct. Found in open forests in hilly or mountain country.
- A. rupicola***
SA, VIC Prickly shrub; phyllodes broader at base tapering to long sharp point, 1.5-2.5cm long; flowers pale balls, singly Aug – Nov. Adaptable, likes rocky well drained soils.
- A. saliciformis***
cent NSW Tall shrub or small tree to 8m pendulous; bark silvery. Phyllodes narrow-elliptical 6-12cm long. Flowers pale balls in racemes. Found on sandstone ridges in dry forests Blue Mountains area.
- A. salicina***
Q, NSW, VIC, SA, NT Tall shrubs or small trees 3-12m tall with drooping habit. Phyllodes variable, mid vein; flowers pale yellow mostly in racemes. Pods thick woody. Common and widely spread in inland, usually along creek banks.
- A. saligna***
s-w WA Shrubs to small trees 3-8m tall; phyllodes dark green, 8-25cm x 2-50mm, prominent mid vein; flowers bright yellow balls in racemes; naturalized in many areas in eastern states.