

S.G.A.P. ACACIA STUDY GROUP
NEWSLETTER NO. 6
JULY 1971

Mrs I B Armitage
Note new number: 10 Anembo Road
Terrey Hills
NSW 2084
Telephone 4501652

A big thank you to all those busy people who managed to find time to write me "beaut" long letters and send lists; a lesser thank you to those who had good intentions but somehow didn't get around to it; and an appeal to those who did nothing to do so now. May I remind you, gently, that one of the purposes of the Group is to exchange information so that we may all learn from one another.

NEW MEMBERS: Mr F J C Rogers, author of "A Guide to Victorian Wattles", Mrs Oxnam, Secretary WA Wildflower Society, Mr Graeme Lees, a teacher at a NSW School who is encouraging his children to plant and look after acacias in the school grounds, and Mrs Rook, Mrs Carne, Mrs Schotte and Mrs Oudley, all of NSW,

SEED BANK: Miss Pearce has informed me that she would like to remain as Curator. She feels she is entitled to this by virtue of the fact that she has been curator since 1964. Mrs McHaffie, a Victorian member, also wishes Miss Pearce to continue in this role. She further wishes that the question be put to members.

I am very conscious and appreciative of the valuable work done by Miss Pearce during the last seven years, but I should have thought that the advantages in the leader holding the seed bank were fairly obvious. From my own point of view I can only say that, to me, the seed bank is an integral and vital part of the whole purpose and function of the Study Group; practically every project, every experiment, and indeed every plant grown by a member starts with the seed. So far as I am concerned I could not possibly carry on as leader whilst divorcing myself and my activities from the seed bank. It would be impossible to do the job as I think it should be done.

There is also the question of correspondence. To date, I have written and/or received something like 70 letters in connection with the Study Group. 40 or so of these have contained seeds or information pertaining thereto, as well as dealing with other matters. If someone else had been concerned with the seed bank all this correspondence would have to be duplicated.

So it seems to me I can offer you two alternatives:-

1. Either Miss Pearce maintains the Group's only official seed bank, in which case I would regretfully resign.
2. Miss Pearce keeps the seeds she has – obviously no one could or would want to force her to relinquish them, and I will remain as leader and continue to add to those I already have.

In the latter case I would be only too willing to include with the Newsletter any lists Miss Pearce might send me.

So would all those members who do NOT agree with my second alternative and would like me to resign please advise within the next month, so that I may know where I stand. No ifs or buts please. I'm afraid it must be a straight out yes or no, otherwise the thing could drag on for months, and nothing could be worse for the welfare of the Group than a lot of petty internal squabbling.

Thanks to the generosity of Mr Copley of Bute, SA, many new species have been added to the seed bank. Others are now out of stock. A new list is enclosed. Will all members please make an effort to contribute to the seed bank.

The words "If I am still leader" must preface the remainder of this Newsletter.

I hope to publish next Newsletter a list of seeds especially wanted, and in the meantime to buy some seeds to be shared by those who have said they wish to participate in this.

LIST OF MEMBERS: Several members have said they would like to correspond with and exchange specimens with others. I will publish a list of members in October Newsletter. Meantime if anyone who DOES NOT WANT to receive correspondence please advise so that I may mention this at the time of publishing list.

BOOKS: Several members have asked for recommendations. I put this question myself to Dr Tindale and she advised as follows:- “Flora of Victoria”, Vol 11, J H Willis. Have been unable to obtain this but Dr Tindale has just advised me to write direct to Mr Willis. Will report on this later. “How to Know WA Wildflowers”, Vol 1 – Blackall & Grieve. I ordered this about two months ago. So far not to hand despite several reminders. Understand it has to come from Melbourne. Will describe when received. “Trees of NSW” – R H Anderson. This lists 117 acacias with botanical descriptions of most and gives localities where found. Although it does not purport to deal with shrubs it seems to me that all but the very smallest get a mention eg *A. suaveolens* and *A. myrtifolia* are listed. Price \$6.30 and I think well worthwhile, and of course equally good for species other than *Acacia*. Anderson spent 43 years on staff of Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney, ending up as Director. “Flora of ACT” – Burbidge & Gray. I looked at this in the library. It describes 23 acacias, nearly all of which can be found in other books recommended here. I did not buy it. “Flora of SA”, by J M Black. This is the bargain of the century. It comprises 4 volumes by Black and a supplement by Eichler totaling in all, 1313 pages, for a total cost, including postage, of \$6.41. If you want only the volume which deals with Acacias, it is Vol II, at 85 cents plus postage 16 cents. The supplement, which contains alterations and additions to all 4 volumes (including several pages on Acacias) costs \$1.60 and 21 cents postage. Order from SA Govt Printing Dept, King William Rd, Adelaide, SA 5000. Two other books I recommend are:- “A Field Guide to Victorian Wattles”, F J C Rogers. Price \$2.35. This lists approximately 80 Acacias with a brief description of each, localities where found, flowering period and a very attractive line drawing of each. “Australian Wattles”, Baglin & Mullins, costs \$1.25. The cover caption reads: “An Australia-wide selection, including species from remote parts of the tropical north and arid interior, as well as familiar and well loved garden favourites” and this is exactly what it is. 56 species are presented in excellent colour, descriptions are in the language of the layman, and the location of every photograph is given. If you want to convince some doubting Thomas how glorious and varied our wattles are, this is the book to show them. I also find Beard’s “Catalogue of WA Plants” with a one-line description of every plant in WA of inestimable value. I think that now costs \$3.00. Obtainable from King’s Park.

ACACIAS – THE POOR RELATIONS: You may have noticed in March issue of “Australian Plants” an article by E Wittner of King’s Park “Western Wildflowers with horticultural potential” and another by Marion Blackwell “A Landscaping Plan for a New Garden”. Neither of these articles mentioned ONE SINGLE ACACIA. I wrote to Marion Blackwell:- “... I am astonished and dismayed to find that not one single acacia finds its way into your garden ... I would have thought that everyone, prejudiced or not, would want at least one or two. There is such an infinite variety to choose from, no one can deny the beauty of their riotous burst of gold AND the beauty of form and foliage in many species. Furthermore, one of them is our national floral emblem,” and to Mr Wittner:- “... astonished and dismayed .. I can hardly credit that you yourself could not name dozens of acacias which would fulfil your requirements (a) to (g) equally as well as many other species you have listed. Perhaps you could now write an article dealing with suitable acacias? One of them is, after all, our national floral emblem”. No reply from either!!

FINANCE: NSW SGAP has generously given us \$30, so that with the \$9.10 handed over by Mrs Chandler our receipts to date are \$39.10. April Newsletter plus Aims & Objects plus envelopes and stamps cost \$15.53. July Newsletter should cost about \$12.50 total, so we should have enough cash for October also, and I will probably have to ask for a sub for 1972.

LISTS OF ACACIAS: It would be appreciated if those who have not sent in lists would do so at once. In October Newsletter I hope to give a summary of these, and to start obtaining information from those who are growing the smaller varieties, so that we can make comparisons and see how they behave in different environments.

ACACIAS IN TUBS FOR SHOW PURPOSES: In NSW I hope to get other members to join with me in growing some of the smaller species in tubs, so that perhaps by 1973 we might be able to produce 20 or so for the Annual Show. It would be great if you people in other States would try to do the same. Feel sure that this would give a tremendous boost to acacias. The only one I’m sure will stay small enough and flower in two years is *A. drummondii*. Anything else will be experimental. Now I come to think of it, though, I’ve seen *A. cultriformis*, *A. cardiophylla* and *A. podalyriifolia* in prune tins, already in flower, at nurseries, so we shouldn’t have too much trouble. But we must START NOW – THIS SPRING – with seed planting.

MEMBERS' COMMENTS: Not nearly enough of these. No one took up on the idea of nominating difficult species, except Mr King of Faulconbridge, NSW, who has had difficulty with *A. parvipinnula*, *A. armata*, *A. alata*, *A. alata* and *A. aculeatissima*. He suggests the last named as the one to try. Unfortunately none of these are now in the Seed bank, except a very few *A. armata*, but will try to get them. The only one I have as a plant is *A. aculeatissima*, given to me about a year ago and consisting of two small branches, one about 6 inches and the other 12 inches – completely prostrate. Despite its size it flowered last year and now has buds again. Planted in a very dry sunny spot in sandy soil (natural) it looks extremely healthy, but has made very slow growth. Mrs Murphy could you let us know about yours? Also seed if and when. I also have *A. alata* just planted out as a seedling. According to lists received no one else has any of these four species growing. Incidentally, Mr King says modestly that he has “only a very meagre knowledge of acacias, having only grown them since September 1968.” But in October 1969 he put in seeds of 100 SPECIES! Hope to have some progress reports on these for October.

Mr Copley, of Bute, SA has been a marvellous help, sending me not only many packets of seed, but specimens and slides. A year or so ago he sent to Sydney Herbarium the first flowering specimen of *A. gilesiana* which they had ever had, and last year found four plants of *A. spilleriana*, formerly thought to be extinct. He also took Dr Tindale on a conducted acacia tour through Eyre Peninsula and Flinders Ranges.

More interesting comments received from Mr Des Nelson of Alice Springs, who contributed to earlier newsletters. He is, quite rightly, I think, concentrating on NT species as they are probably the least known of all, and is growing many other genera as well. He tells us that Centre acacias, accustomed to a 10” rainfall, respond very well indeed to the application of water many times in excess of what they would normally receive; also that they respond to applications of superphosphate. Have asked him to let us know just how this is applied. He has many seeds (acacias and others) for sale at 50 cents a packet, but I’m sorry it’s too expensive in duplicating and extra postage to include here. If there is anything particular you want, write to him.

Mr F J Rogers, of Ringwood, Victoria, tells us that the garden of which he wrote in “Australian Plants” in June 1968 and which had an outstanding collection of acacias belongs to Mr Arthur Cudmore. Sadly, it is now being subdivided as Mr Cudmore is suffering badly with arthritis.

INFORMATION PLEASE: I have a large area of swamp land. *A. elongata* is very much at home there, where it grows into a long rangy specimen about 10 feet high with a magnificent florescence. Can anyone recommend any other species for swampy conditions? *A. trineura* and *A. subporosa* have been mentioned, also *A. pychoclada* which is very similar to *A. elongata*. Can anyone confirm any of these?

AND THAT’S THE END OF THIS NEWS BULLETIN FROM YOUR STILL HOPEFUL LEADER.