

There are not many Acacias in flower in the garden at present, only A. penninervis, A. meisneri, A. subulata and A. retinodes. The latter is commonly grown in Tasmania and this year its flowering has been exceptional. Perhaps the fact that we have had a very dry year has had some beneficial influence.

My thanks to Regions and Study Groups for their newsletters which are read with great interest. It is good to see that some of the Study Groups which had lapsed are now active again with new leaders.

ACACIA STUDY GROUP PROJECT - Guide in the selection of suitable Acacias for different climatic areas.

Thank you to those who have sent in their recommendations for the project. We still need more members to take part to give a better spread of information. If you live in a different climatic area, I would appreciate your help with recommendations as set out in June 1990 newsletter.

To date we have received:

- 4 reports from southern Tas.
- 4 reports from east & west Vic. & Melbourne suburbs
- 2 reports from Qld. near Brisbane
- 1 report from inland South Aust.
- 1 report from northern NSW coast
- 1 report from mid NSW
- 1 report from WA near Perth

I have started collating the information from these reports but it will be a long job and the time factor is a problem for me at present.

SUBSCRIPTIONS - Just a reminder that subs. are due on 30th June 1991. They will remain at \$3.00 per year at present.

MEMBERS NOTES

Helen Bizzai from Gawler, SA reported that she has two A. peuce (Waddywood) growing on their block. They are growing very slowly but are doing well and she would like to grow more of them.

Keith Ingram commented on the difficulty he has experienced when selecting the right Acacias to grow at Mt Tomah near Bilpin, NSW. For instance, he has found that he cannot grow either A. handonis or A. chinchillensis from south-eastern Qld.

If you are having a problem with selection of appropriate species for your particular area, Keith has suggested that the Maslin and Pedley 'Distribution of Acacia in Australia - Species Distribution Maps' would be a great help. They show on grid maps where each species occurs. Write to WA Herbarium, P O Box 104, Como, WA.

Jeff Irons of UK has reported that in early January A. mucronata (3m tall) had produced flower buds and that a pot-grown A. terminalis which he had placed inside the house was in full flower. It is 6 years old and just 45 cm tall!

A former member, Beverley O'Keeffe, has kindly forwarded us a selection of Acacia seed. She mentioned in particular beautiful A. uncifera which occurs mainly on Burra Range near Pentland Qld. Has anyone grown this species? It is well worth trying in a hot dry garden.

Another supply of seed has been forwarded from WA. There is an air of mystery surrounding these seeds as they were collected from the road to Bungalbin, north of Yellowdine on the East-West Highway. The collectors initially intended growing the seeds themselves for their garden, having the plants identified when they flowered. So there are no names. Would you care to grow some of them and when they flower, press two specimens of each, number them and send one to WA Herbarium for identification, letting us know the results so that we may give the seeds a name?

SEED VIABILITY TRIALS

To date I have sent out seed to about 7 or 8 members and have had one report of the results. The trial is not difficult, just a matter of taking note of results and reporting back so that seeds which are not viable can be removed from the seedlist. Of course, if these seeds are grown on, a spin off from this exercise could be the discovery of wrong identification on seed packets.

I have just been notified by one member that seed from the seed bank labelled 'A. pravissima (1) plantation grown' appears to have developed into Acacia triptera. Please check if you have been sent this particular batch.

ACACIAS FROM THE PAST

I have often wondered when Acacias first made their appearance in Australia. Now I have read in Mary White's fascinating book 'The Nature of Hidden Worlds' that in the late Miocene period over 5 million years ago, Acacia appeared in the pollen records for the first time. This was at a time when the continent had begun drying out and during the following Pliocene period (5.3-1.6 million years ago) Acacia developed as a coloniser in the dry country.

Another interesting piece of information was that in New Zealand during the latter period Acacia species were known to occur and were abundant in dry coastal zones, but as the Ice Age continued Acacia became extinct in New Zealand.

ACACIA SEED FOR HUMAN FOOD - extracted from ACIAR Forestry Newsletter February 1991.

In earlier nutritional analysis of some seed of specific Acacias protein levels of 17-26%, fat 3-16% and carbohydrates 30-50% were reported. These levels are much higher than those found in crops like wheat and rice.

Some of the species included in the trials i.e. A. holosericea, tumida and cowleana, have shown considerable promise in forestry programmes in parts of Africa and present real possibilities for introducing perennial woody food-producing legumes into sustainable dryland

farming systems.

Both A. holosericea and A. tumida are fast growing, multiple purpose trees which produce heavy seed crops after about two years. A. cowleana and A. coriacea also show promise although the latter is more slow growing than the others.

'In southern Niger seeds of A. holosericea have been prepared in various ways and served in dishes either alone or in blends with other grains and pulses. In this area there has been a very favourable response to the acacia dishes.'

However, the question of acceptability of acacia seed products by local people is still to be determined and further study and trials will be necessary to improve management, yields and food values of the product.

ACACIA NEWS - Extracted from 'Austrobaileya' Vol 3:2 1990 published by Queensland Herbarium

NEW COMBINATIONS IN ACACIA by Mr L Pedley who has transferred those species which were described previously as Racosperma into Acacia, until such time as the position regarding their status is clarified.

Acacia armillata - previously Racosperma armillatum

Acacia blakei subsp. diphylla - known both as A. diphylla and R. blakei ssp diphyllum

A julifera ssp curvinervia - known as both A curvinervia and R. juliferum ssp curvinervium

A meiosperma - previously R. meiospermum

A ommatosperma - previously R. ommatospermum

A plectocarpa ssp tanumbirensis - known as both A tanumbirensis and R. plectocarpum ssp tanumbirinense

A polydenia - previously R. polyadenium

A racospermoides - known as R. paniculatum

A spirorbis ssp solandri - known both as A solandri and Racosperma spirorbis ssp solandri

A stipuligera ssp glabrifolia - known both as A stipuligera var glabrifolia and R. stipuligerum ssp glabrifolium

Two new species were described and illustrated in the above journal:

A porcata - a decumbent shrub less than 0.5 m tall, allied to A. longipedunculata with fine terete phyllodes arranged in whorls and ball flowers on long stalks in August-September. It is restricted to a small granitic area SSE of Mundubbera, Qld.

A acronastes - allied to both A floydii and A betchei from SE Qld. A spindly tree to 8 m tall with rather thick linear phyllodes; pale

4.
yellow ball flowers on racemes in July-August. It occurs on shallow rocky soils on mountain peaks, e.g Mt Edward, Mt French and Mt Maroon in SE Qld.

STUDY GROUP LEADERSHIP - After giving the matter considerable thought I have decided that after over 10 years as leader, the time has come for me to step down and invite someone else to take over the group, giving it fresh impetus.

I have enjoyed immensely being Study Group leader and have gained a great deal personally from meeting so many wonderful people.

John retired towards the end of last year and we plan to travel more often on the mainland. For instance this year we plan to be away for at least three months taking in the ASGAP conference/seminar in WA. So, to anyone prepared to involve themselves in a very interesting hobby, I would love to hear from you as I would like to hand over by the end of June. Of course, all arrangements of this kind must go through Jan Sked, the Study Group Co-ordinator.

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