

## ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS

## CALOTHAMNUS STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER

Number 112

July, 1989.

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Well, here was I thinking that there would not be a newsletter this month, but I didn't get away for the big trip as my husband, Pat, has to have an operation on his shoulder. It was very disappointing as I was wanting to get some slides of *Calothamnus* in their natural habitats so I could make a start on putting together the audio-visual on our attractive & useful genus. But hope to make it next year.

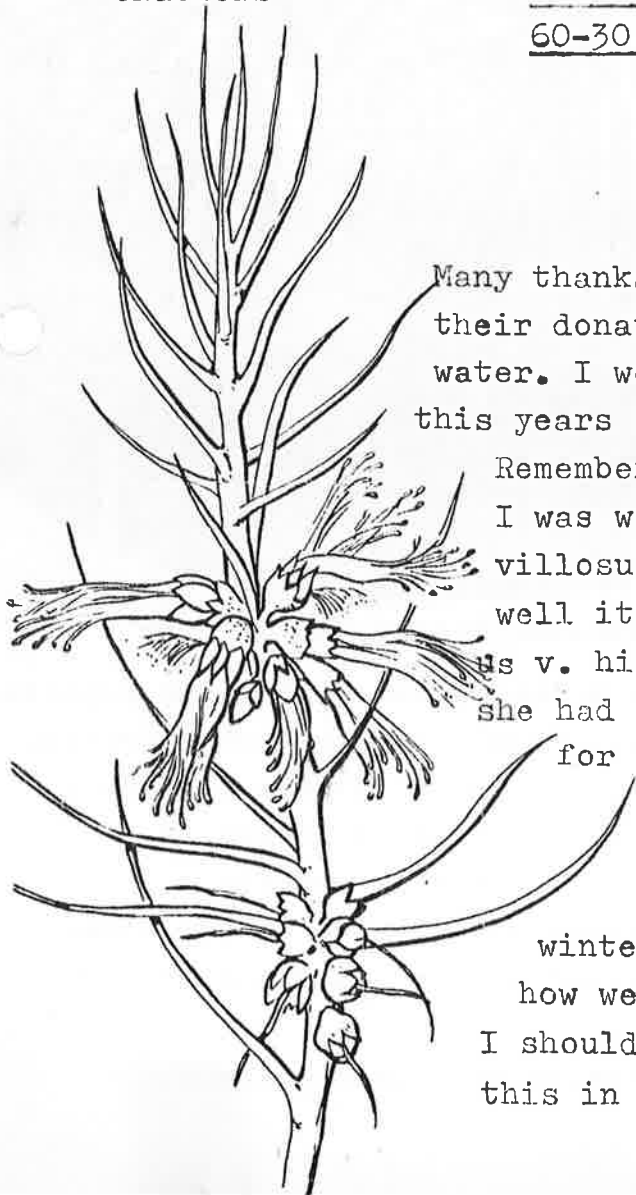
So on to our financial statement.

Income.

brought forward:	\$18-30
Memberships	30-00
Donations	<u>12-00</u>
	<u>60-30</u>

Expenditure.

Photocopying	16-50
stamps	22-41
envelopes	2-00
liquid paper	<u>2-00</u>
	42-91
money in bank	<u>17-39</u>
	<u>60-30</u>



Many thanks to the groups who have been generous with their donations. It has certainly kept our nose above water. I would also like to thank those who have sent this years subs in.

Remember that in the last newsletter I said that I was waiting for some flowers on the *Calothamnus villosus* to make sure that it was that species, well it did flower proving that it was *C. quadrifidus* v. *hirsutus*. Kaye also wrote to tell me that she had the same result! So I am on the lookout for a real *C. villosus*, with 5 staminal bundles. Can anyone help?

We have had an exceptionally wet & cold winter so I am looking forward to spring to see how well my *Calothamnus* have stood up to it. I should be able to draw some conclusions about this in the next newsletter.

I am terribly ashamed of myself, as it is over two months since I started this newsletter! But I picked up an extremely savage virus, which is taking a lot of shaking off. It really is the first time that I haven't been able to send an illness packing, but I guess that what becomes of being too complacent.

I haven't had any offers yet from anyone willing to grow the *Calothamnus homolopholus* prostrate form from seed, but seeing that every one thought that we were going to be away for six months, that is to be expected. So if anyone would like to do so, there is seed in the seed-bank. Mine is still keeping its prostrate habit but not showing any sign of flowers yet. Maybe some members of groups which are in our Study Group would like to try growing some of these? It would also be interesting to try some seed of the yellow flowering *Calothamnus quadrifidus* to see if we get any the same as the parent.

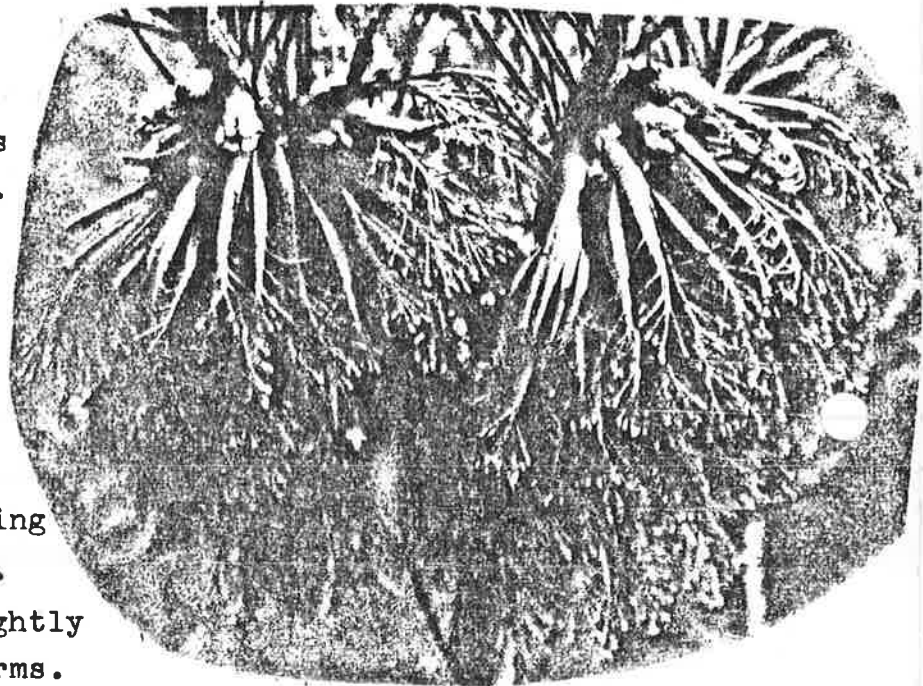
The report sheets have made some interesting reading, so I thought that I would share some of the information with you.

#### *Calothamnus quadrifidus*

As I expected the greatest amount of reports were of this very hardy, attractive species.

This is a very variable species, we have reports of bushes from nearly prostrate to 2½ metres high, some open shrubs to thick rounded ones. Leaves are also extremely different, various forms ranging in length from 1 cm to 2.5 cm. & being terete, linear or slightly flattened in the different forms.

They can also be slightly or very hairy, smooth. Colour varies from



light greyish green, light, rich or bright green while some reports mention bronzy foliage or tips. Most people have reported profuse flowering, but an occasional report of sparse flowers but mostly over long periods. Conditions or feeding haven't seemed to account for these differences, so this could be genetic.



Most flowers are a bright red, in dense spikes on one side of the stem. Of course there are a few yellow forms, either nearly prostrate or taller bushes.

Quite a few reports mentioned the popularity of this species with

many different honeyeaters. There have been reports from hot dry areas, right through to humid places. They are growing in sandy, heavy loams, shales or stoney soils; acid & alkaline soils; in full sun to shade under Eucalypts & with Grevilleas; in areas of heavy & very light rainfall; places where they get cold winds in winter & even in light or medium frosts. There are some reports of them growing in areas where there are many frosts in winter some getting down to  $-9^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Ends of the branches are reported to get frost tipped & one of a severely frost bitten one regrowing well from the ground.

Some people regularly fertilize with organic materials or slow release granules & water regularly, but the reports don't seem to show any difference to those without these extra attentions.

We had 25 reports for this *Calothamnus*, or rather a few more as most of the reports for *C. villosus* have turned out to be for *C. quadrifidus*. For many of these I thank Lyndall as she collected a lot from members of her group in Canberra.

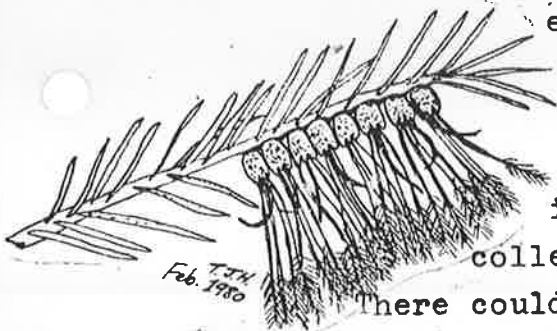
There could be a few reasons why this species is so widely grown being the extreme hardiness, attractiveness & ease of obtaining propagation material. By the way the oldest plant in the reports was eleven years old & still going well.

#### *Calothamnus sanguineus*.

There were 7 reports of *C. sanguineus*, the species name meaning blood red.

This is a dwarf to medium shrub, mostly erect, leaves being either hairy or smooth, very crowded. They are nearly terete & can be straight or s shaped. Most shrubs are thick but there have been a few reports of ones being a bit leggy especially those growing in the shade.

But the flowers of this species are very beautiful and unique in that the upper two staminal claws are fused to form a very broad single claw. These flowers are large, generally a deep red, occasionally yellow, in small clusters or short spikes. Most reports tell about the showy flowering. They seem to be a bit frost tender, but if I can get hold of one I would like to see if this is only when young. Most reports were from dry climates, only one from a moist one. This one was not a very good bush, but was not planted in a very good position, so we really need information from higher rainfall and humid areas.



If anyone has any Calothamnus growing and hasn't a report sheet, please let me know so I can send one. We need reports from as many different climatic areas as possible.

There is still plenty of seed in our seed bank for anyone who wishes to send for some.

News from members would be very welcome for our next newsletter. Hope to hear from you soon.

All the best,

Barb

Thank you for  
your subs + donation

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