

ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS
CALYTRIX STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER NO.10
MAY 1997

HELLO MEMBERS,

How to begin, Cynthia and I spent more than a little time debating our suitability for this task we are undertaking, only time and your judgment as members will decide the outcome. We have at least the time to devote to these gems of the bush known as Calytrix. We have been members of S.G.A.P.Vic .Inc. for over 22 yrs. and have been associated with propagation of various species including Calytrix during this period. We made a decision to concentrate on Calytrix with our main aim being to increase our own gene pool, and as the Calytrix Study Group was without a leader we felt that this could be a shared experience with like minded members.

We feel one of the main problems limiting availability of these very desirable "Gems" of the bush is the difficulty of growing from seed. Our endeavour is to try and get a suitable regime incorporating some of the more recent systems of treating seed prior to propagation. ie, smoke, light, dark, and Gibberellic Acid (Ga3.) of as many species as possible. Obtaining fresh viable seed has always been a problem. We welcome the participation of interested active members. Any successful results or indeed failures will be published in subsequent newsletters.

So far tests we have performed with grafts are of limited value, in our trials the grafts appear to have taken until the stock plants of C.tetragona of unknown origin failed. We are now in the process of propagating other forms of C.tetragona for future trials this coming spring as this could be a better time for trialing. We would be interested to hear if any members have had more success, perhaps you would also let us know if you have any reports of failures and your thoughts on why they failed. Our failures are as important as our successes if we are to increase our knowledge of the genus. Early days yet for this procedure.

Cuttings. This appears to be the easier way of propagating Calytrix species. However if cuttings are not exchanged from differing localities the resulting plants are all of the same genotype which may be a disadvantage if one of the requirements are healthy fertile seed for subsequent propagation. We have found that all the Calytrix we have in cultivation root readily with comparative easy techniques. We ourselves use a polystyrene box 380mm X 280mm X 240mm in height, the bottom drainage holes covered by shade cloth with a 50mm layer of washed river sand on the bottom. Cuttings are placed in a mix of washed river sand with the fines removed through a fine flywire mesh to which we add perlite and vermiculite in the proportions of 1/3 X 1/3 X 1/3. We have found *C. leschenaultii* more difficult to root in this medium but have had a good result with chopped spagnum moss, we feel that in future tests a 25mm topping of chopped spagnum moss on top of our basic mix would give equal results but still allow roots to penetrate into the mix. The top of the box is covered with a sheet of glass and in the summer shade cloth on top of the glass. Box is kept in a semi-shaded position and through spring, summer, and early autumn excellent results have been obtained. Rooting in winter was very slow many cuttings hanging on to the following spring. Cuttings are routinely dipped in a liquid hormone 2000 or 1000 I.B.A. depending on hardness of material or more recently we have used CLONEX purple which is readily available at gardening outlets. Our cuttings also receive watering with a weak liquid fertilizer at no more than half recommended strength.

In line with our desire to propagate from seed we will purchase seed from commercial sources and also welcome donations of seed from any other source, and give feedback information in future newsletters.

Fees for the Study Group are due at the end of June and have been set at \$5-00 for 12mths., we look forward to hearing from you.

We extend a warm welcome to new members Esma and Alf. Salkin.

Cynthia and Ted Beasley.
Calytrix Study Group Leaders.