

GOODENIACEAE STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER 4.

Spring is well and truly with us and now comes the reward for the effort involved in maintaining a garden. After several disappointments I find that I can now grow (some) *Dampiera* species with a healthy specimen of *Dampiera linearis* about to burst into bloom. I have recently obtained suckers of *D. linearis* and *D. rosmarinifolia* and hope to add these to my collection.

I know Dennis still wants people to maintain Goodeniaceae collections in different areas and would welcome anyone offering to help in this regard.

Please write and share with us your thoughts and experiences with growing Goodeniaceae.

Reports from Study Group members

Joan Hales of Glen Alvie, Victoria writes:...."I have been in the process of replanting some of my garden. In general there is little point in trying to establish plants in the garden here until April as we are on tank water....rainfall is around 700mm per year, mainly between the end of March and the early part of December. The ground dries out then to a point where a downpour of 5mm will only wet the top few mm of soil which then dries out very rapidly.

In the past 2 - 3 months I have planted out *Dampiera trigona*, a *Lechenaultia biloba* cutting after the original plant died, *Dampiera rosmarinifolia*, *D. linearis*, *D. hederacea*, *Lechenaultia formosa* (pink), and *L. formosa* "prostrate red". I still have *Scaevola striata* and *S. albida* in pots. The *S. albida* cannot stand drying out; I thought I was going to lose it earlier this year.

It would appear to me that, at least in this area, we have some naming problems with purchased plants. About 2 years ago I purchased a plant labelled *Dampiera cuneata*. It seems that the plant is actually *D. hederacea*. At another nursery I bought a plant named *Dampiera stricta* and while I had definite misgivings about the plant actually being *D. stricta* I bought it anyway. On arriving home I discovered it was a near perfect match for my *Dampiera linearis*. It most certainly isn't *D. stricta* as I've checked both the Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants and J.H. Willis' Handbook descriptions. I have seen *D. stricta* growing in East Gippsland some years ago and thought this plant was different."

Rita Luff of Rowville, Victoria has sent the following report: "I have *Dampiera diversifolia* - don't we all, *D. linearis*, *Scaevola* "Mauve Clusters" and recently *Lechenaultia* "Red", which after reading your newsletter seems to be "Beaumaris Red". All have been propagated very successfully except the *Lechenaultia*.

To see how easy the *Dampiera* are to propagate I've put *D. linearis* and *D. diversifolia* in little brown bottles of just water

- they've only been in for 4 days - so far nothing, still looking healthy and no sign of rotting.

At the moment I'm keen to find summer flowering plants. Summer seems to be a bit dull in my garden after the brilliant spring display.

We have bought 6 acres of land in Beaconsfield Upper. It is undulating, has lots of rock and is very "wild" at present as a result of the Ash Wednesday fire - lot of wattles. We'll be building our house within the next few months and I'll be looking forward to landscaping and finding "treasures".

Dampiera in the ground - reliable?

by Your Leader

The answer to this query is in general yes however there are some notable exceptions. This article is another in my "trials and tribulation" series of reports and is predominantly a collection of musings and observations (at times not very systematic) on species of *Dampiera* I have tried in my garden over the past 3 years. I will not report them in alphabetical order but more in order of planting from front to back in my garden (it is far easier for me).

***Dampiera linearis* (fine leaf)** This is one of the more readily available forms of *D. linearis*. Currently I have about 5 forms in the ground all of which seem to be surviving and, in certain situations, actually thriving. The secret to this species seems to be a substantial mulch around the plants to encourage suckering. With some forms the parent plants do not survive more than 1-2 years after which sucker growth maintains the viability of the species. It doesn't seem to matter greatly whether it is a pebble mulch or a vegetative one nor does soil type seem a major problem as long as drainage is reasonable. In general I would recommend variants of this species for rockery features where sucker growth is not likely to be too invasive or situations where a free-flowing or streaming effect is desired as they can cover large areas if unchecked. This particular form is very floriferous with very deep purple flowers and narrow almost terete leaves. It is not quite as vigorous as other forms mentioned below and has a fairly specific flowering period from mid-winter to the beginning of summer. The display is very intense particularly if a white pebble mulch is used for contrast. The foliage is a very dark green. A very desirable form and like all forms of *D. linearis* is easy to propagate from cuttings or suckers.

***Dampiera linearis* (*D. cuneata*)** This form has been wrongly labelled in the nursery trade for many years. It is probably the most easy attainable form and is quite vigorous and dependable. The leaves are almost ovate and the flowers the more typical pale blue with a white flush in the centre. Foliage tends to be grey. Much more open growth pattern than the form above but still manages a lovely display particularly through spring and early summer.

Dampiera linearis (early-flowering form) This form is one collected by Roger Elliott. It is similar to the "D. cuneata" form in leaf shape and flower colour but tends to flower from late autumn onwards finishing in spring.

Dampiera linearis (late-flowering form) Another of Roger Elliott's forms. This is a distinct variant with green rather than grey-green foliage and darker almost red new growth. Flowers tend to be a mid-blue shade and are held more erect than on other forms. Quite vigorous when established flowering from about mid-spring through the summer.

Dampiera linearis (grey-leaf form) I have included this variant here under *D. linearis* although there is a great deal of doubt as to the species. It is more likely a form of *D. rotundifolia*. This "species" is a lot more difficult to propagate and establish. The new growth is a beautiful soft blue-grey while the mature growth does closely resemble *D. linearis*. Sucker growth is not nearly as pronounced as with plants discussed above. Propagation from cuttings is much more successful with mature material however this is not so easy to come by because of its habit of continually throwing soft regrowth. A very beautiful form or species once established.

Dampiera triloba This species is quite vigorous but has a very open, sprawling habit and to this point is not as floriferous as other species. Leaders can up to 0.5 m long and grey-green in colour. Growth can quite woody in well-established plants. Does sucker freely in pots but not as prolifically in the garden to date. Seems hardy in my situation and is worth persevering with further.

Dampiera alata There are a number of species that approximate the description for this species. The form I am cultivating does appear to be the type species although this still has to be confirmed with Roger Carolin. In a large pot this species makes a magnificent dense display. Foliage is green and sprawling although the tips, and therefore the flowers (mid-blue), tend to be held upright. Sucker growth is prolific. In the ground things tend not to be as rosy. Growth can be very slow, with a plant in my garden only just showing secondary growth after about a year in the ground. Cuttings tend to strike easily but to grow on very slowly. Should make a magnificent feature plant once established but only time will tell.

Dampiera trigona (type species) This species comes in two colour forms, blue and pink. Foliage is long and bright green with long linear leaves and an open upright habit. Flower colour is quite intense and an unusual combination of blue and purple. The flowers are held terminally and have a perpetual shimmer looking to be in motion continually even on the stillest day. A lovely feature plant for a rockery.

Dampiera trigona (fine-leaf or dwarf form) This form is of a quite different habit to the type species. The growth is quite dense and low (>5 cm) and very fine. Flower colour is a dark blue however the flowers are almost inconsequential (3 mm v 10 mm) until the whole plant is in flower. The whole plant would only cover about 20-25 cm. This form will sucker however in general although this species is not prolific in this respect. A nice plant for a small cranny in a rockery.

Dampiera rosmarinifolia There are at least two colour forms of this species, the common blue form and the "pink". The latter is really only a washed-out colour variant. Interestingly the latter is not regarded as being as vigorous as the blue in the more southern states whereas it is the only form I have been able to establish in my garden. The species is relatively easy to propagate from cutting but difficult to grow on in my conditions with dy-back of branches quite common with subsequent death of the plant. I suspect this species appreciates heavier soils than my sandy rock.

Dampiera hederacea This species has a very variable reputation in Sydney. When it grows well it is spectacular and very vigorous but losses can high with severe fungal attack and unsightly defoliation leading to death particularly in the late summer. I have little problem in my garden however I dont water my garden plants which seems to be the secret for our humid climate and high rainfall. It also appears to appreciate full sun under these conditions and suckers very, very prolifically under a white pebble quartzite mulch. Never stops flowering but has spurts in late-winter through spring.

Dampiera teretifolia This species appears quite at home on the eastern seaboard although a WA species. Can grow to about a metre or more in height and width with rather tangled leader growth. New growth is covered in soft, brown hairs giving it a distinctive "dusty" appearance. Flowers are terminal, single and prolific. Colour tends to be purple rather than blue. Flowered late spring this year after most of the other species were finishing. Seems to like the dry, sandstone, slope on which it is growing at present. Currently it is about 2 years (in ground). Does not appear to sucker but relatively easy to propagate from cutting.

As you can see the newsletter is noy particularly large this time around. I am receiving very little imput at present and would welcome news items either with regard to growing species or even sitings in the wild. The latter is especially interesting for distribution of species as well as access to collection material.

Dennis Margan