



Australian Native Plants Society (Australia) Inc.

ACACIA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER

Group Leader and Newsletter Editor
Bill Aitchison
13 Conos Court, Donvale, Vic 3111
Phone (03) 98723583

Seed Bank Curator
Victoria Tanner

Email: acaciastudygroup@gmail.com

No. 123 December 2013

ISSN 1035-4638



Contents	Page
From the Leader	1
Welcome	2
From Members and Readers	2
Save Our Flora	2
Tasmanian Bushland Garden	2
Olive Pink Botanic Garden	3
Acacia murrayana	4
Two New Acacia Species	4
Acacias (Australian) Not Welcome in South Africa	4
Late Flowering Wattles	6
Acacias in the News	7
Photos of Wattle Places	8
Wattle Make You Laugh	8
Seed Bank	9
Study Group Membership	9

I would like to acknowledge two generous donations that we have received recently. We received a donation of \$162 from the Bendigo Native Plant Group, which represented a portion of the wattle sales at their recent Show (we had provided a quantity of seed to them that they used in propagating plants sold at the Show). We also received a donation of \$100 from SGAP Queensland – this was in recognition of our Study Group display at the ANPSA Conference put together by **Michael McCuaig**.

I think it is appropriate to use most of this donation money in the purchase of seeds for our Seed Bank. We did, however, use a part of the SGAP donation in the purchase of a copy of Maria Hitchcock's book, A Celebration of Wattle, that we donated to the Buddina State School. It was the students from this School who took part in the Wattle Blossom Fairies colouring in contest, and whose drawings were displayed at the ANPSA Conference.

In relation to the Wattle Blossom Fairies drawings, I should have mentioned previously that the original drawings were by **Jan Sked** – my apologies to Jan for this oversight. Note that in our previous Newsletter No. 122, we reproduced drawings by three of the children. We provided a copy of the Newsletter to the School, and I understand the students were particularly happy to see their efforts in print.

Another reminder about our Field Trip next year. This is being held in the Barakula Forestry area of Queensland, from the 1st to 4th August. If you have not already registered your interest in attending, please do so.

In conclusion, I would like to extend best wishes to all for the festive season and for a safe and healthy 2014.

Bill Aitchison

From The Leader

Dear Members

As we draw to the end of another year, I am reminded that in some parts of Australia this is a good time of year for collecting wattle seed – so if you are in a position to collect seed, perhaps you may be able to donate some to our Seed Bank. Our Seed Bank curator **Victoria Tanner** has been kept busy over the last few months filling requests for seed from members, but the operation of the Seed Bank does rely significantly on receiving donations of seed from members (although we do buy some seed from commercial sources).

Welcome

A special welcome to **Des Nelson** (Alice Springs) who has joined our Study Group.

From Members and Readers

Maria Hitchcock (Armidale, NSW) advises that she now has quite a few Acacias from the New England area available for sale through her website (coolnatives.com.au) and more are being added all the time. Thanks also to Maria for drawing attention to the following link that relates to Wattleseed:

http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2013/nov/13/wattleseeds-backyard-delicacy-inspiring-chefs?CMP=ema_632

Victoria Tanner (Canberra, ACT) advises that when recently visiting Armidale, NSW, she went to a local native plant coop. nursery. She notes that the nursery had a good range of Acacias that were well priced. The nursery does not do mail order so you would need to plan a visit. The web site reference is:
Armidaletreegroup.org.au

Peter Cunningham advises that a new website has been established (www.aciaciatreeproject.com.au). This website is managed by the Food Security and Climate Change team at World Vision Australia. It includes a considerable amount of news and research in relation to the use of Australian Acacias in combating hunger in areas of the world that are subject to famine. One item that can be downloaded from this website is the Proceedings of the Wattle We Eat for Dinner Workshop on Australian Acacias for Food Security, held in Alice Springs in August 2011. Our Study Group was represented at the Workshop by Esther Brueggemeier. The 146 pages of Proceedings include a number of papers on the use of Australian Acacias as a food source.

Des Nelson (Alice Springs) advises that in April this year he was interviewed by Alun Hoggett of Desert Channels Group of Longreach. He was one of a group who were considered to have something to do with working or living in the Lake Eyre basin area. An extract of the interview in a compilation with others was launched at a Conference in September in Port Augusta. It can be seen on dcq.org.au/lakeeyrebasin. In the interview, Des refers to his discovery of the Acacia that was named in his honour (*Acacia desmondii*).

Matthew Alexandra (Bacchus Marsh, Vic) refers to an article that appeared in ACRES Australia (1st edition, 1989). This article was titled "Watch your mineral levels if you're serious about growing legumes", by Dr Hooshang Nassery. This article noted that "the application of nitrogenous fertilisers to legumes, as well as increasing acidity, also

slows nitrogen fixing processes to a halt". Let me know if you are interested in reading the article.

Save Our Flora

Maria Hitchcock (Armidale, NSW) has recently advised that she and **Bob Ross (Tura Beach)** have established a new independent national project called Save Our Flora. This project recognizes that there are many Australian native plants at risk in the wild, and the best way to conserve them is to spread them around gardens. This strategy has been found to work very successfully with a wide range of plants including ones that are rare and endangered, and many gardeners are already doing this.

The Group that has been formed by Maria and Bob hope to compile information as to who is growing which threatened species, and if they are available for others to grow. Perhaps Group members will be able to share seed, cuttings and information. They would also like to hear about threatened flora in its natural habitat.

The Group plans to start up a Facebook page where members will be able to add photos and comments for discussion. For more information or to join the Group, send an email to saveourflora@gmail.com (registration with Group is free).

The Group will also have a regular Bulletin, the first edition of which was issued in November (and included an article on the "Bali Wattle", *Acacia pycnostachya* (listed as Vulnerable)).

Of course, the Project's area of interest extends to all genera, not just Acacia. However, Acacias are well represented on the EPBC list, with 2 being classified as extinct, 3 critically endangered, 30 endangered and 39 vulnerable. You can view the list at <http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicthreatenedlist.pl?wanted=flora>

Congratulations to Maria and Bob on this initiative – it seems a project well worth supporting.

Tasmanian Bushland Garden

Chris Clarke (Thornbury, Vic) recently visited the Tasmanian Bushland Garden at Buckland, Tasmania. Chris comments that this is a lovely garden to visit, and took some photos of wattles in the garden – two of these are shown below (*A. axillaris* and *A. derwentiana*).

I contacted **Keith Corbett**, who is Secretary of the Garden, and asked him about the Acacias growing there. Keith responded as follows:
"Thanks for the inquiry about the Tasmanian Bushland Garden, and our acacias.

We're a Regional Botanic Garden, showcasing the indigenous flora of SE Tasmania, located about 50 km NE of Hobart, on the Tasman Highway. We have 22 ha, of which about 1 ha is display gardens and related facilities, and the rest is native bushland with walking tracks. We're open every day except Xmas Day, during daylight hours, and entry is free. The gardens are run by volunteers.

The display gardens are organised into plant communities and groups, including a bed with Tasmanian acacias. We have most of the smaller wattles, including several rare endemic species. The two tree species (*A. mearnsii* - black wattle, *A. dealbata* - silver wattle - grow in the bushland). *A. derwentiana* is a relatively recently recognised endemic species from the Derwent Valley, with an attractive weeping habit. We did have a nice specimen of another rare endemic, *A. pataczekii* (Wallys wattle, named for its discoverer Wally Pataczek), but it suckered badly through the bed and had to be removed.

I'm happy to take any further questions or inquiries.”



Acacia axillaris

Photo Chris Clarke



Acacia derwentiana

Photo Chris Clarke

Olive Pink Botanic Garden

The Olive Pink Botanic Garden is located in Alice Springs, and covers an area of 16ha. In this article, Des Nelson reflects on his association with Miss Olive Pink, who was the Garden's founder and first honorary curator.

Miss Olive Pink was a remarkable and very determined lady, born in Tasmania in 1884. She became a draftsperson with NSW Railways and became very interested in Anthropology. She visited Daisy Bates at Ooldea, South Australia, and made her first visit to the Centre in 1930. She championed the cause of the Aborigines and was also greatly interested in nature, in particular the flora. She produced excellent paintings of local plants. She succeeded in gaining the area which is now the Botanic Garden in 1956. She lived there alone until her death at 91 in 1975. With the help of an aboriginal off sider she set to work establishing the garden. She was quite an eccentric and very good at getting her own way from Government departments. Many people were wary of her but there were some who were fortunate enough to be her friends. Patricia and I were among them. I brought seed and plants from the bush for her to try at her place. When we became engaged Miss Pink invited us – a real honour! – for a little private party. Again, when our first child was born she invited us again to her place. Our 40th Wedding Anniversary was celebrated at the Garden. Miss Pink had passed away and a curator and staff were running the place. To honour our anniversary a nice big *Acacia maconichieana* was dedicated to us. Our 50th Anniversary (2011) was also celebrated at the Garden. Our *A. maconichieana* continues to thrive. Miss Pink was good at getting her own way but in one thing she failed. She did not want her property named after her but fortunately this wish wasn't granted.



This photo of *A. maconichieana* was taken by National Study Groups Co-ordinator Geoff Lay when he visited the Olive Pink Botanic Garden in May 2008. I am not aware whether it is the same plant referred to by Des in his article.

I received from Des a brochure that describes the various Acacias that can be seen on the "Wattle Walk", one of several walks delineated in the Garden. This brochure describes 20 Acacia species, but there are many other species represented in the Garden. More information regarding the Garden can be found on their web site www.opbg.com.au.

Acacia murrayana

Des Nelson (Alice Springs) recently donated some seeds of Acacia murrayana to our Seed Bank. These seeds were collected from trees to 4m high, growing in deep sandy soil on his property about 14km SE of Alice Springs. Des has written the following in relation to this species.

Here are some seeds from our *Acacia murrayana* trees. I have had to compete with the local Ring necked parrots for them. Our block has 2 metres depth of sandy soil of rather poor quality but it suits *A. murrayana* very well. It's a real desert species occurring common locally in sandy country especially in the Simpson Desert area. Its common name is Colony Wattle due to its habit of suckering from lateral roots so forming groves of small trees. The bark of young trees is pale and pruinose but becomes loose and brown later but outer bark remains pale. In the bush the trees are short lived, maybe 10 years but under cultivation will keep on thriving. They are slender rather ordinary looking plants 3 to 4 metres high but are really glorious when flowering. They bear a profusion of big bright yellow flowers and will do so at the same time each year whether it is dry or wet. Our *Acacia murrayana* trees burst into bloom overnight on September 4th and were enjoyed for several weeks. So dense are the blooms that branches get weighed down, in fact part of our largest specimen broke down to the ground and I had to saw it free. The trees are subject to getting green globular galls the size of a large marble but these are never very prolific and don't worry the trees. The foliage is linear, flat and pale green. *Acacia murrayana* from my observations seems quite unpalatable to livestock which is good for it. When the trees die out in the bush, instead of standing as dry relics, they collapse to the ground and within a year or so the light wood decomposes leaving little trace of its existence. The best attributes of *Acacia murrayana* are

- (1) the glorious annual flower display, and
- (2) its ability to thrive in sandy soil with low nutrient quality.

Something else I have noticed with *A. murrayana* is its consistence in form. They all look alike. This is not the case with many other local *Acacia* spp. Mulga (*A. aneura*) varies greatly in form, as does Gidgee (*A. georginae*) and *A. victoriae* and others.

A. murrayana is named after a man named Murray who was a member of the party of explorer Alfred William Howitt who had visited the Lake Eyre district and also explored parts of eastern Victoria. He later (I think later) led the group searching for Burke and Wills.

Two New Acacia Species

Two new species, *Acacia alaticaulis* and *A. kulnurensis*, belonging to *Acacia* section *Botrycephalae* and allied to *A.*

terminalis have recently been described. Both species are rare with restricted distributions north of Sydney, from the Howes and Mangrove Mountain areas, into the Hunter Valley region of New South Wales, Australia.

Although both of these species are superficially similar to *Acacia terminalis*, they can most readily be distinguished from this allied species and each other based on vegetative characters. They are morphologically distinct from the remaining taxa in the *A. terminalis* complex, particularly in having sessile or near-sessile leaves and markedly recurved pinnules.

A revision of the *A. terminalis* complex is ongoing, with several taxa currently treated as subspecies with manuscript and phrase names.

Reference:

Kodala PG, Harden GJ, *Acacia alaticaulis* and *A. kulnurensis* (*Fabaceae, Mimosoideae*), rare new species from New South Wales, Australia *Telopea* 15: 119–126, 2013

Acacias (Australian) - Not Welcome in South Africa

By Victoria Tanner

In September this year I was part of a tour group to South Africa organised by the guides of Kirstenbosch Botanic Gardens (Capetown), which was also celebrating its 100th birthday. Besides spending many hours wandering around this beautiful garden which sits dramatically below Table Mountain, the group also toured further afield in the Western Cape through both the fynbos and succulent karoo biomes. In many places it felt like we were not far from home with eucalypts growing nearly everywhere, callistemon not uncommon and other Aussie flora including Norfolk Pines, grown in Capetown gardens. As we travelled out of Capetown, Australian Acacias were more commonly (unfortunately) seen prompting the South African guides to grimace. They explained their dislike for our lovely acacias and as an Acacia Study Group member, it was disappointing to see and hear about how our acacias have become serious weeds in South Africa. Although local actions have been taken to combat these 'introduced weeds', they are still a huge, ongoing problem in South Africa. I thought this subject quite interesting and on my return home I wanted to find out more. I contacted the South African Agricultural Research Council-Plant Protection Research Institute, which kindly provided me with a number of relevant research papers.

Although the Acacia Study Group promotes the cultivation of Australian Acacias, I thought an article on this topic worthwhile as it may help us to understand acacias in both their positive and negative light as well as remind us that

nearly any plant can become ‘weedy’ if grown in the ‘wrong’ place. It also shows that the study and knowledge of acacia growth, reproduction and pests in Australia, can also be used to benefit other countries which want to remove/reduce the same acacias. South African researchers regularly visit Australia to learn, tour and obtain samples for use as acacia control methods and this access to Australia has been acknowledged as a major contributor to the success of South African researchers, in this field. (Impson, Purcell & Gordon, 2011).

History

Australian acacias were originally introduced in to countries like South Africa at least since the early eighteenth century for reasons of forestry, to be used as windbreaks between pine plantations, for use as ornamental garden species, for soil stabilization, tannin or for food for fodder crops. Earlier records of exotic plant introductions began with European settlement of South Africa in the mid 1600’s. Acacia seeds were thought to have originated via England where Australian plants were at the time, popular garden species, although some plants may have arrived direct from Botany Bay (Impson, Purcell & Gordon, 2011).

Background

Out of all Australian Acacia species considered problematic or invasive worldwide, ten are present in South Africa. All grow in a wide range of habitats including disturbed areas and climates, are fast growing, reach reproductive maturity within a few years and have high levels of seed production with persistence of seed in the soil. Seeds can disperse widely in South Africa by birds, rodents, ants, humans, passively dispersed or even spread rapidly via waterways (Impson, Hoffman & Kleinjan, 2008).



A. longifolia growing around a stream in South Africa Photo V Tanner

On my own visit to this country, I was shocked to see how aggressively both *A. saligna* and *A. longifolia* in particular, were growing along and even in, a small flowing stream in

fashion similar to how invasive willows grow here. As we drove around the countryside it was also not uncommon to see large thickets of acacias growing roadside and often in farmlands or in parks. In many cases, there was evidence that control attempts of the South Africans were being effective with large galls and other visible damage to the acacias in evidence.

Table1. Ten of the invasive Australian Acacias recognized worldwide where biological control projects have taken place in South Africa (Impson et al. 2008).

<i>mearnsii</i>	<i>decurrens</i>	<i>longifolia</i>	<i>cyclops</i>	<i>podalyriifolia</i>
<i>dealbata</i>	<i>melanoxyton</i>	<i>saligna</i>	<i>pycnantha</i>	<i>baileyana</i>

The problem of removing or reducing wattles in South Africa has been even further complicated by the fact that despite their invasiveness, in some cases Australia Acacias are still welcome and being commercially grown (there is even a South African Wattle Growers Union). Because some acacias have now become economically important for South Africa; for timber, tannin or stock fodder (particularly *A. mearnsii* and *A. melanoxyton*), discussions between the two sides have led to Acacia control being focused at methods that would affect reproduction rather than those that would damage the plant itself. The commercial Acacia industry remains an important and vocal consideration when introducing any biological controls in South Africa.



Acacia affected by biological controls

Photo V Tanner

Biological control

The first biological control of Acacias in South Africa was started in the 1970-80's. Now ten biological agent species from Australia have been released in South Africa to control ten of the Australian Acacia target species. Only one of the ten biological control methods is fungal (affecting both the reproductive and vegetative growth of *A. saligna*). The other nine agents are herbivorous insect species which suppress the reproductive output of its host plant. Five of these are also seed-weevil eating species, while two are flower-galling fly species and two are bud-galling wasp species.

In choosing agents, consideration must be given to not interfering with the commercial attributes of the plant (and therefore aim at seed production). While generally such an approach does not achieve a reduction in the densities of existing pest plants, this approach in South Africa has reduced the rates of spread and densification of target acacias (Impson, Kleinjan, Hoffman, Post & Wood, 2011).

New biological controls are being continually being evaluated but it is thought that despite this continuing research, no single agent will be relied upon as being a single control mechanism for Australian Acacias. It is the combination of biological, mechanical and chemical control methods that have proved most successful within the current South African environment. This combination has involved large manual clearing of acacias, a program which has been also used to alleviate poverty in South Africa over the past ten years (since 1996 under a government "Working for Water Program"). This method has been quite successful in reducing the seed banks of invasive acacias and its success is more likely if a program of seedling clearing follows.

After years of research, trials and experimentation, it has been established that when deciding on the most appropriate type of Acacia control program for a particular Australia Acacia in South Africa, consideration of a number of factors must be included. The economics of weed invasion for the Acacia being considered (including costs to the environment), as well as the costs of clearing and reducing the spread are also critical considerations. Potential impacts on biodiversity are also vital in designing a control program along with the need to clearly identify and agree on the project's expectations, likely outcomes and goals of the control management program.

While South Africa uses biological control to control invasive Australian acacias, they are also problematic in a number of other countries (along with a number of other Australian species). The USA is also conducting such control programs and Portugal was to begin in 2011. While I was amazed at the flora of South Africa, it was very surprising for me to learn of just how many Australian plant species have become weedy in South Africa (including hakea, callistemon, casuarinas, melaleuca, syzigium and grevillea spp.). However, Australia in return also has pest

plant species from South Africa and many 'weedy' or potentially weedy South African plants are still readily available in our nurseries. Perhaps the lessons to be learnt include that any plant can become weedy if grown in the 'wrong' place or and that we need to take care when choosing plants (including knowing where they come from) as well as assessing their ability to spread uncontrolled in the local environment?

Postscript: Thank you to Fiona Impson for her supplying the relevant research papers.

References:

1. Australian Acacia species (Mimosaceae) in South Africa, F.Impson, J. Hoffman & C.Kleinjan (2008).
2. Biological Control of Australian plants: a South African and US Perspective, F. Impson, MF Purcell & AJ Gordon (2011).
3. Biological Control of Australian Acacia Species and Paraserialanthes lophantha (Willd.) Nielsen (Mimosaceae) in South Africa (2011) published in African Entomology 19(2): 186-207 (2011).

Late Flowering Wattles

I recently mentioned to Victoria Tanner that I had not received many member contributions for this December Newsletter. Victoria suggested that maybe we could do an interesting short article about late flowering wattles. This short article therefore represents the combined efforts of Victoria and myself – the Canberra references provided by Victoria (on 20 November 2013), and the Melbourne references provided by me (dates as shown).

After September and early spring and the wonderful acacia blossoms, you may be thinking, why can't we have more acacia flowering displays at other times of the year? Well, with careful species selection you can with many acacias flowering late. Around Canberra (and NSW), *Acacia falciformis* is presently in flower with a stunning floral display. The flowers are a lovely lemon which contrasts with the grey-green large leaves, a wonderful display tree for a garden. It is described as being a shrub or tree to 12m.



A. falciformis at Bemboka NP NSW

Photo V Tanner

Acacia mearnsii is also in full flower at the moment (mid-late Nov) in Canberra reserves. Again a tree with lemon flowers but with dark green foliage.

In Melbourne, I am grateful to **Ray Turner** for checking on the late flowering wattles at the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne. The Acacia collection in the Gardens significantly increased with the opening of Stage 2 of the Gardens, in fact a list that I have from last year records nearly 80 different varieties. Ray (who is a Volunteer Guide at the Gardens) visited the Gardens on 22 November, and recorded the following in flower:

Acacia subulata, *A. caerulescens*, *A. stenoptera*, *A. continua* and *A. mearnsii* (this was in flower in the bushland area just outside the Australian Garden). Also one plant of *A. alata* only had a couple of flowers left.



A. subulata at RBG Cranbourne

Photo Ray Turner

Also in Melbourne, I visited Maranoa Gardens (in suburban Balwyn) on 4 December, which has an excellent Acacia collection. The outstanding Acacia in flower on that day was *Acacia muelleriana*. Within the Gardens this used to be grown as a feature tree in the main central lawn area, its attractive bipinnate foliage making it an ornamental tree all year round. After about 20 years, this tree died, but seed collected from this tree was then used to propagate the specimen currently in the Garden, which is now about 6 years old and 4m in height. My thanks to Paul Birch (Horticulturalist Specialist at Maranoa Gardens) for his observation that this tree is quite spreading with many branches. Paul explained that this represents a lack of apical dominance – if you wish to learn more about apical dominance, I suggest that you should visit the Gardens and ask Paul, or alternatively if you do a Google search for “apical dominance”, you will get 150,000 results!

Other Acacias in flower in the Gardens were *Acacia longissima* (this is almost always in flower at Maranoa Gardens), *A. wattiana* and *A. retinodes* (these are probably *A. provincialis*). *Acacia caerulescens* (Buchan Blue) had just finished flowering. There are two specimens of this in

the Gardens, and they are quite brilliant when in flower in about late November (although they do have a relatively short flowering period). But at all times of the year, they are very showy with attractive blue green foliage. This species is listed as vulnerable, and hence is one of the species of Acacia included in the Save Our Flora project (refer page 2). It is endemic to East Gippsland in Victoria.

There is an *Acacia falciformis* at Maranoa Gardens, but this has grown to be quite a tallish tree, and we couldn't tell looking from ground level as to whether this was in flower.

One more report – Ray Turner tells me (14 December) that in his own garden at Cranbourne South, *Acacia huegelii* is currently flowering, a ground cover plant with whitish flowers.

It would be interesting to hear from other members from different areas, about their local late flowering wattles or can offer suggestions for gardeners interested in extending their garden's acacia floral display.

Acacias in the news

The town of Huntly is about 12km north of Bendigo, in central Victoria. *Acacia williamsonii* (Whirrakee Wattle) is endemic to the Bendigo region, and the largest population of this wattle is located in the forests surrounding Huntly. This has prompted the town to celebrate this species as a floral icon that is an important part of the district's identity.



Whirrakee Wattle sculpture at Huntly

Photo Bill Aitchison

In particular, a sculptural sign has been erected in the centre of the town at the corner of the Midland Highway and Gungurru Road. This sign was created by Bendigo artist Yvonne George in collaboration with Huntly Primary School students and was officially opened in July this year by the mayor of Bendigo Lisa Ruffell. A number of specimens of *A. williamsonii* have been planted around the sculpture.

Another Acacia species that has been in the news recently is *A. veronica*. This species was first described in 1989, and is endemic to the Stirling Ranges in WA (and is conservation listed in WA). This wattle happens to be the only host species for a particular insect called Vesk's Plant-louse (*Acizzia veski*). In fact, although there are a number of scattered populations of *A. veronica* in the Stirling Ranges National Park, this insect is found on only one of these populations.

Vesk's Plant-louse has been listed as critically endangered by the IUCN red list (July 2013) and vulnerable by the WA State Government (February 2012). Despite having been nominated to the Federal Government, it has yet to be reviewed. The future of this tiny insect is clearly linked to the future sustainability of the population of *A. veronica* on which it occurs – any threat to the host plant represents a threat to the future survival of the insect.

Note: This information has been taken from an article written by Dr Melinda Moir, School of Plant Biology, University of Western Australia. Reference: <http://theconversation.com/australian-endangered-species-vesks-plant-louse-21288>

Photos of Wattle Places



This month's winner is **Victoria Tanner**, who has provided

the above photo that she took recently while on Waterfall Way. She camped at Wattle Flat Camping Area, at an undeveloped but lovely camp site. The campsite is located in the Styx River State Forest, 65 km east of Armidale, NSW. Wattle Flat is named for the Acacias that flower along the banks of the Styx River in early spring.

WATTLE MAKE YOU LAUGH?

**There's a competition running,
And the object of the scheme
Is to write a funny ditty
With the wattle as its theme.**

**So I thought I'd have a crack at it,
In the hope I'd make you smirk;
But wattles aren't real funny,
So I don't think it'll work.**

**But I went out to my garden;
May as well, inside's a curse -
I was seeking inspiration
For a bit of raucous verse.**

**I gazed up at a wattle,
But I still was feeling glum;
Then I backed on Prickly Moses
And its needles pierced my bum!**

**Now a lady on her balcony;
She lives across the street,
Was startled by my yelping
And came over for a geek.**

**She was very sympathetic
As she came to rescue me.
But while pulling out the prickles
She was breakin' up with glee.**

**So if perchance you wander
In the garden, just for fun
Be careful that you keep the wattle
Well behind your bum.**

**Brian Roach
July, 1997.**

(Thanks to Maria Hitchcock for providing this poem by Brian Roach).

Seed Bank

An up to date list of species held in our Seed Bank was included in Newsletter No. 122 (September 2013).

The procedure for requesting seed from the Seed Bank is as follows. Study Group members are entitled to lodge up to 3 orders per member per year, with 18 packets maximum in each order (negotiable). There is a charge of \$2.40 in relation to each order, to cover the cost of a padded post bag and postage. The \$2.40 may be paid in stamps or by direct credit to our Group's bank account. Some members include an additional payment with their annual subscriptions to cover the Seed Bank charge.

Requests for seed may be lodged in either of the following ways:

1. By email to our Study Group email address, acaciastudygroup@gmail.com (emails to this address go directly to both Victoria and Bill Aitchison). If you make a request by email, you will also need to make the necessary payment by one of the above methods. If you are paying by stamps, these should be mailed to Bill Aitchison, 13 Conos Court, Donvale, Vic 3111.
2. By mail (enclosing stamps if required). These requests should be posted to Bill Aitchison (address as in the previous paragraph). Bill will then advise Victoria of the request.

Although we do purchase some seed from commercial sources, we also rely upon donations of seed. If you are able to help with any seed donations they would be very welcome (we would ask you to post any donations to Bill Aitchison, who will forward them on to Victoria). It also helps enormously if you are able to clean, sort and label the seed correctly.

We would like to maintain some data on your results in propagating seed from the Seed Bank. We would therefore ask if you could provide a report on your results, recording

information on species, number of seeds sown, number germinated and days after sowing.

Thanks to **Joanna McLachlan (Bathurst, NSW)** for a report on her results. Joanna writes (31 October 2013) as follows:

“I got some *A. genistifolia* and *A. pendula* from the Seed Bank earlier this year. My rather haphazard propagation techniques resulted in 3 *A. genistifolia* plants, not sure how many seeds I planted. I poured boiling water on the seeds and soaked. Germination seemed to take some time but I didn't record how long.

Had no success with *A. pendula*. I'm not complaining - it's great to have so many seeds available.”

I note that in our previous Newsletter, Michael McCuaig reported that he had no success with the *A. pendula* seeds that he obtained from the Seed Bank. Perhaps there may be someone who could donate some new *A. pendula* seeds?

Barry Reville (Moorabbin, Vic) reported that he had no germination from his *A. dietrichiana* seeds – but he is currently making another attempt.

Study Group Membership

Acacia Study Group membership for 2013/14 is as follows:

\$7 (newsletter sent by email)
\$10 (hardcopy of newsletter posted in Australia)
\$20 (hardcopy of newsletter posted overseas)
Subscriptions may be sent to:
Bill Aitchison
13 Conos Court
Donvale, Victoria 3111

Subscriptions may also be paid directly to our Account at the Bendigo Bank. Account details are:

Account Name: ASGAP Acacia Study Group

BSB: 633-000

Account Number: 130786973

If you pay directly to the Bank Account, please advise us by email (acaciastudygroup@gmail.com)