



Association of Societies for Growing Australian Plants

ACACIA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER

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excellent hot weather and heavy thunderstorms. The Acacias in the garden that were heavily pruned early November have recovered easily, now bursting with lush, green foliage once again. These have also formed an abundance of new flower buds. Perhaps we will be in for a glorious spring display next year in 2010.

The **ASGAP Conference** has come and gone and I was very happy to meet many of you in person. Now when I receive your mail I can actually visualise who I am dealing with and that is simply much nicer. The study group display was a great hit. The main wattle we used in the display was *Acacia saligna* as this was still flowering abundantly around Geelong, seeing it was already early October. A selection of framed Acacia photographs also received many comments. We had a lot of interest and excitement around our table and it was also successful in attracting some **New Members** to the Study Group.

The **Study Group Meeting** arranged on the Wednesday was very helpful in a number of ways. As the time and needs of my family are growing each year, I am finding it more and more difficult to keep up with all the demands. There were many offers for help in managing the study group which are greatly appreciated. To ease the load a little we now have **position changes** within the study group and our brand spankin' **new email address**. As of January, all correspondence via email should go to acaciastudygroup@gmail.com

The emails simply need to be addressed to the person you are wishing to communicate with.

The positions held are as follows:

Leader:	Esther Brueggemeier
Editor:	Bill Aitchison
Membership Officer:	Bill Aitchison
Seed Bank Curator:	Esther Brueggemeier

From The Leader

Dear Members,

Well here we are again at the **end of the year**. Every December I can't believe how fast the year has gone by. As November and December are the **pruning months** in my garden, I am actually very pleased that we are having

As Bill will be taking over membership please send all cheques and membership forms to his address which is in the header of this newsletter. Regarding the Seed Bank I will continue managing this for the moment but this may change later down the track.

The tours were very enjoyable and well organised. One of the highlights included a magnificently flowering bush on Brendon Stahl's (president APS – Vic) property at Deans Marsh of Acacia *something*, that caused quite a commotion as to its true identity. Some thought *Acacia rigens* while many suggested otherwise especially due to its rather golden foliage colour, instead of the more common gray-green. With a mass of brilliant yellow flowers, and a lovely, compact form, it made for many discussions. Brendon was kind enough to cut off a fairly large piece for me to take home and try to identify. The 'Wattles of Australia' CD is an invaluable tool in keying out any **mystery species** we may find.



Brendon Stahl's *Acacia rigens*

The beginning was fairly straight forward and the search was narrowed down rather quickly. I ended up with two possibilities – *Acacia havilandiorum* and *Acacia rigens*. Now it was getting tricky so out came the trusty magnifying glass because the deciding factors were the **seed pods and the peduncle hairs**. Thankfully, the specimen had a few seed pods still attached from the year before. After measuring and magnifying everything, the specimen definitely keyed out as *Acacia rigens*. With that in mind a little research was called for and interestingly the phyllodes of *Acacia rigens* actually have **yellowish nerves, some more prominent than others**. That may explain the more than usual yellow hue to the specimen in Brendon's garden. Possibly, after a good trim, though, the fresh growth may be greener again. I have found that many of my bushes do go quite yellow looking when all their energy is spent in producing abundant flowers. After this, the process of photosynthesis works on lush green leaves once again. Brendon, you certainly have a gorgeous specimen of *Acacia rigens*. This one should be promoted in horticulture.

Another wonderful moment was on the tour of the Otway foothills. There were many, very large groves of *Acacia verniciflua* that stood two to three metres tall. As an Acacia lover I was looking up and admiring these as some were still in flower. The majority of the tourists, strangely enough, were crouched down admiring **greenhood orchids** carpeting the area *under* the Varnish Wattles. Finally, standing back and looking at the whole picture, it dawned on me that there may be a special relationship between the two. Perhaps the rhizobium bacteria of that particular Acacia species are especially favourable to the greenhood orchid? (This would also mean my greenhoods are planted under the wrong wattle! – *Acacia howittii*).

According to our very own orchid expert, Cathy Powers, there is a mycorrhizal fungus that is required by orchids to germinate seed and extract nutrients for growth, etc. So, they may simply be enjoying the same soil type, soil fungus and environment or there may be an added symbiotic relationship in play here that has something to do with the Acacia **rhizobium**. Now the search is on for more information and study into this field. If there are any experts in this area please email the Acacia Study Group. We will keep you posted as we research this further.

In the meantime I would like to encourage all to have a great time over the holidays and enjoy the time spent with family and friends.

Cheers,
Esther Brueggemeier

Welcome

A special welcome to the following new members and subscribers to the Newsletter:

John Boevink, Port Sorell, Tasmania
Tony Cavanagh, Ocean Grove, Vic
Judy English, Albany, WA
Graham Goods, Horsham, Vic
Wendy Grimm, St Ives, NSW
Jan Hall, Yarrowonga, Vic
Serena Ho, Mt Waverley, Vic
Graeme and Bernie Miller, Dixons Creek, Vic
Bill Molyneux and Sue Forrester, Dixons Creek, Vic
Kevin Murray, Longwarry, Vic
Chris Nayda, Pt Augusta, SA
David Parsons, Yandoit, Vic
Aileen Phipps, Oyster Bay, NSW
Marcus Schnell, Elanora Heights, NSW
Liz White and Nick Theodore, Bundamba, Qld

Graeme and Bernie Miller have a love of both wattles and wine – what a wonderful combination! They are the owners of a winery, Graeme Miller Wines, located in the Yarra

Valley, near Melbourne. They have landscaped their winery with a lot of native beds, have revegetated a stream where it runs through the vineyard and also have a fabulous display of indigenous art, principally from the Central and Western Desert areas. For more information, their website is www.graememillerwines.com.au.

Chris Nayda is a tour guide at the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden at Pt Augusta in SA, and after working on a "Wattle Tour" for the garden has become very interested in them.

David Parsons has moved to live on a 20 acre block in Yandoit, a little town located halfway between Castlemaine and Daylesford in central Victoria. A previous owner planted many acacias and David is very keen to identify the different types as well as being able to propagate from the many seeds produced each year. Land quality is poor and the early gold diggers have probably washed away much of the top soil, but the acacias seem to survive.

Liz White and Nick Theodore live at Bundamba in Queensland and are about to join the Ipswich Branch of SGAP. They are currently helping Nick's parents control the weed problem on their 23 acre block at Mt Mee, just outside Dayboro. They have been propagating Lomandra, Dianella, Eremophila, Grevillea, Myoporum and anything that will grow quickly enough and thickly enough. They have decided that small Acacias are definitely the way to go. The area they are going to do is approximately 300 sq m, and they are going to clear it and mulch it first, then plant everything in one hit. The soil is well drained schist, clay, rock with a couple of cm of black soil on top. They have just had about 200mm of rain lately, but that is not too common. In the past Liz has worked for many years in wholesale nurseries, although her background is Parks and Gardens. (Note: If any Study Group members (especially Queensland members) would like to suggest Acacia species that may do well in these conditions, we will pass your suggestions on to Liz and Nick).

It is especially good to welcome a couple of younger Study Group members. **Serena Ho** is a student at Deakin University and has a particular interest in ethnobotany. **Kevin Murray** is also a student, and he is very keen on anything to do with the bush.

From Members and Readers

Marion Simmons (Laguna, Tasmania) advises that Tasmania has had the most spectacular Acacia flowering this season, both in the bush and in her garden. They have also had in some areas the most rain in 50 years!

Marion also comments on Acacias as street trees (following Don Perrin's question in our previous Newsletter). Without

actually going out and checking it, Marion advises that in Launceston she has noticed *A. melanoxylon* is used as a street tree where there is sufficient room for its spread and certainly in the parks (and very handsome it is too)! *A. riceana* (a Tasmanian endemic) has been used as well. Along roads and in roadside plantations etc. *A. baileyana*, *A. pravissima*, *A. dealbata* and *A. floribunda* are common. *A. baileyana*, *A. decurrens*, *A. paradoxa*, *A. longifolia* and *A. pycnantha* are considered possible weedy species because they seed down so easily.

Marion notes that the *A. cognata* cultivars are popular in Tasmania, and there seems to be a wide range available in the nurseries, including 'Fettuccini'.

She also notes that the revision of *A. verniciflua* and *A. leprosa* has turned out to be very interesting. It seems Tasmania will lose *A. verniciflua* and gain *A. leprosa* var *graveolens*. She has two mainland forms of *A. verniciflua* in the garden. One clearly keys out to the Seymour form of that species. The other could go either way but neither is similar to those that she called '*A. verniciflua*' previously.

Marion also comments on the Hayfever issue, and regrets that it is an issue that is alive and well and well ensconced in the minds of many in the general public in Tasmania. Every time she mentions wattles she receives the same comment that they give them hayfever and they never consider that there could be other factors causing the problem. Unfortunately, no amount of information to the contrary has any effect. She agrees that an authoritative article on the subject would be timely, possibly to be published in the general press or as an article in Australian Plants.

Marion has also provided some notes on longevity of wattles (following our request for input from Study Group members on this subject). We will incorporate the information provided by Marion in the article that we are preparing (for a future Newsletter). We would very much welcome additional comments from members who have not already responded on this question.

Richard Clark (from the Geographe Community Nursery at Busselton, WA) tells us about some Acacias that they have added to their new list. After a good seed collection, they have added *Acacia nervosa*, together with *A. lasiocarpa*, *A. applanata*, *A. incurva* and *A. lateriticola*.

Richard comments that *A. lasiocarpa* grows north of Busselton, basically Capel northwards, and is a great garden acacia. *A. applanata* is quite interesting, and he is hoping to see it used as a garden plant. *A. incurva* is quite a difficult one for the nursery and for revegetation, but not so easy to cultivate in a garden as it prefers really wet areas. *A. lateriticola* is quite pretty (they have previously been growing *A. lateriticola* glabrous variant which looks quite a different thing altogether).

Our Gardens

The Summer 2009/2010 issue of Our Gardens (the quarterly journal of The Garden Clubs of Australia Inc) featured an article, Designing With Wattles, by Mary Wingrave. Our Study Group provided 6 photos which accompanied the article, and information on the Study Group was also included.

Racosperma - Soon to be on our Coat of Arms?

- Australian Acacias may be reclassified as Racospermas.

by Matthew Alexandra, Bacchus Marsh, Vic

At the 2005 International Botanical Congress, a decision was made to retain the use of the name Acacia. This involved replacing the original African type species, *Acacia nilotica*, with the Australian *Acacia penninervis*. It appears likely that this decision will be challenged at the next Congress which is scheduled to be in Melbourne in 2011. If the decision is overturned most of the species in Australia, which are presently in the genus Acacia would be reclassified as Racosperma.

This name change would have major repercussions and costs for those who have some involvement with native horticulture within Australia, for the general public, and for the Australian and overseas horticultural industries.

For those who have an amateur interest in horticulture it may seem like a relatively minor change - changing the name of a genus. But for many people it could be quite a difficulty to remember that such a large range of species now are no longer to be called "Acacia".

For those involved in making an income from native horticulture, there are more serious and long term problems and associated costs. Apart from the costs of redoing price lists, inventories, labels etc. and time taken to inform staff and customers there is also the be expect ongoing confusion from both domestic and oversea parties such as quarantine and clients who could be expected to take at least a few years to become familiar with the new name.

Though it is difficult to have more than a rough approximation of the cost of the Acacia name change, one person has come up with a basic approximation of the cost of such a change as being around the \$100 million mark. This figure was arrived at by the owner of Forest Seeds Australia.

Note: Our thanks to Matthew for raising this Acacia Name Change issue – something we may well hear more about in the next year or so. We would welcome views and thoughts from other Study Group members, for example in relation to the question of costs that would be incurred if the 2005 decision were to be reversed.

Rare Wattles rediscovered in WA

In October, the WA Department of Environment and Conservation announced that two acacia species have been rediscovered in the central Wheatbelt, one of which had not been sighted since it was first collected 160 years ago.

Acacia leptoneura was previously only known from a specimen collected by James Drummond about 160 years ago. The population now discovered consists of one single plant on a mostly cleared road reserve north of Dowerin, about 150km north east of Perth. The plant grows to 60cm high and spreads to 2.2m.

The other recent discovery was of *Acacia torticarpa*. This was previously known from only a small handful of collections by Charles Gardiner during the period 1945-49. The population of *A. torticarpa* recently discovered consists of 120 plants and was found just north of Cunderdin.

DEC staff are undertaking further surveys to try to locate additional populations of each species, and seed collections are also planned.

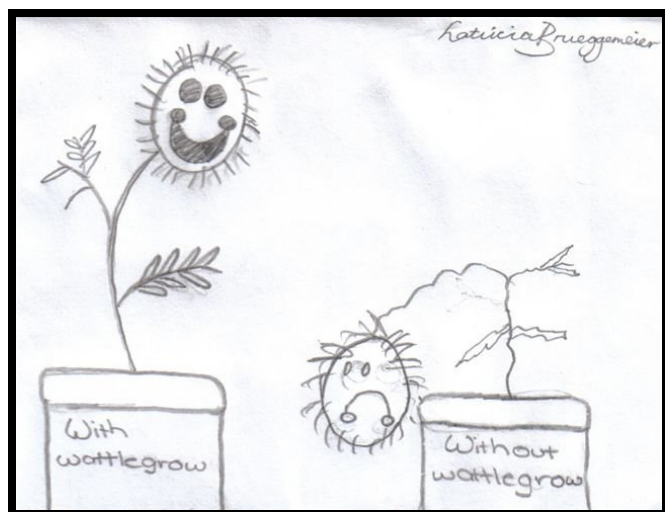
Report on further trials with Wattle Grow

by Judy Barker, Hawthorn East, Vic

In July 2009 we were the lucky recipients of 500g of Wattle Grow which had been damaged in transportation to a customer. The packing had been broken open and the contents exposed. Phillip Badgery, the Victorian Sales Manager of Becker Underwood who produce Wattle Grow, remembered that the Acacia Study Group had undertaken previous trials with WG. He contacted us and sent the product immediately by post. We are most grateful for this assistance. The expiry date was 8/11/09, so the trials had to start fairly promptly.

The seeds were acquired from John Facey with only *A. gilbertii* being from a commercial source, the rest having been collected in gardens. On 5/07/09 seeds were

pretreated with almost boiling water and soaked for 48 hours. They were sown on seed mix, sprinkled with smoked vermiculite and lightly covered with sand. Seedlings were potted into Searles Native Potting Mix.



Without keeping an exact count of the number of seedlings that germinated in each trial, the seedlings of the same

species appeared to have roughly the comparable numbers regardless of whether WG was present or not. It seems likely that for these species WG did not aid germination, but it certainly produced more healthy seedlings in *A. filifolia*, *A. merinthophora* and *A. sessilispica*. It will be interesting to compare the habit of *A. filifolia* with that of *A. assimilis*, of which there are two or three specimens in the garden from the last trial.

A. gilbertii seems fairly easy to grow. This species was featured in the ASG Newsletter (December 2008 issue) looking very attractive with its white ball flowers and red stems. It is said to flower from October to February and, best of all its attributes, it grows about 1m tall.

Comparing the results of various sowings of *Acacia* seed, it seems that the sowing time of early August is successful in our somewhat spartan conditions.

These species have grown reasonably well in spite of the hot weather and the occasional absence of a responsible adult. It is to be hoped that the same can be said of them in April 2010.

Species	Wattle Grow	No. seeds sown	No. of days to 1 st germ.	No. potted on and date of potting up	No. of seedlings alive on 18/11/09	Percentage survival	Comments
<i>A. merinthophora</i>	+ WG	50	17	12 (28/10/09)	6	12%	This species and <i>A. williamsonii</i> have never performed well for me.
	- WG	50	17	3 (28/10/09)	0	0	
<i>A. sessilispica</i>	+ WG	63	17	21 (24/09/09) put back 10	35	55%	Seedlings with WG were much more advanced in root growth and superstructure. In punnet, +WG 14 and -WG 13 (18/11)
	- WG	65	17	24 (24/09/09) put back 15	25	31%	
<i>A. gilbertii</i>	+ WG	29	32	20 (28/10/09)	20	69%	Nodules could be seen on roots of +WG seedlings.
	- WG	29	32	12 (not potted)	12	41%	
<i>A. williamsonii</i>	+ WG	27	0		0	0	In a previous trial this species had been hard to keep alive through extreme temperatures.
	- WG	27	0		0	0	
<i>A. filifolia</i>	+ WG	103	16	22 (28/10/09)	19	16%	Many seedlings of -WG had browned off and shrivelled by 28/10. +WG plants looked quite healthy.
	- WG	103	17	3 (28/10/09)	0	0	

Acacias and Allergies

by Bill Aitchison

The question of Acacias and Allergies has been raised in this Newsletter on various occasions in the past, most recently in Newsletter No. 101 (June 2008). Generally, the views expressed have been that Acacias are often unfairly maligned as being a cause of allergies, when in fact there is often very little evidence that they are the true culprit.

However, this issue continues to be raised with us quite frequently, most recently by Don Perrin (Kippa-Ring, Qld), who recalls an unfortunate story regarding the removal of a marvellous long row of *Acacia podalyriifolia* adjacent to a local school – this following a complaint by a mother that her son, who suffered from asthma, could not attend school while the wattles were there.

It therefore seemed appropriate to review any developments since our previous article in June 2008. This review highlighted the following:

Article in Adelaide Advertiser, 30 August 2008

On 30 August 2008, an article appeared in the Adelaide Advertiser headed “Alert as hayfever season hits early”. This article included some quotes from Dr Allen Gale, from the Adelaide Aerobiology Laboratory. The following is an extract from the article (with Dr Gale’s quotes):

“People tend to blame the poor old wattle tree because they can see it, but that doesn’t blow so far,” he said.

“It’s trees like silver birch, which throws its pollen very early on – before there are any leaves on the tree – that are the main problem.”

The plane trees have already thrown their pollen, but Dr Gale said the pollen is “still blowing around”. “It would still be in the environment.”

Pollen Loads and Allergic Rhinitis in Darwin

During the period April 2004 to November 2005 a study was undertaken in Darwin whereby daily pollen counts were made with detailed identification of plant species (including Acacia species). During the same period, five pharmacies provided daily sales data of selected medications commonly used to treat allergic rhinitis. The results of this study were published in May 2009 and showed that despite low levels of Poaceae (grass) pollen, there was a clear association between grass pollen levels

and daily sales of anti-allergic medications. No associations were observed with pollen from other plant families.

Institute of Pacific Islands Forestry

The US Forest Service’s Institute of Pacific Islands Forestry has directed a project referred to as the Pacific Island Ecosystems at Risk (PIER). This project recognizes that alien plant species pose a well-confirmed and increasing danger to ecosystem integrity, especially on islands. The purpose of the project is to compile and disseminate information on exotic plant species of known or potential threat to Pacific Island ecosystems.

The project achieves this by preparing risk assessments for invasive and potentially invasive species, with each species being considered under various risk criteria, one of which is headed “Causes allergies or is otherwise toxic to humans”. In each case, an assessment of either Y (yes) or N (no) is given.

As a result of this project, risk assessments are available for 12 species of Acacia. These species, together with comments in relation to the assessments, are as follows (Note that not all are Australian species, the non Australian species are noted):

A. auriculiformis – “No reference to the species being toxic to humans or causes allergies”

A. confusa (Northern Philippines) – “Did not find any evidence of it causing allergies in humans or causes allergies”

A. crassicarpa – “No evidence”

A. farnesiana (tropical and sub tropical America) – “No evidence”

A. holosericea – “No evidence of toxicity to humans in the literature”

A. longifolia – Referred to a study which considered allergenic properties of the pollen, which found it was no more so than other common plants.

A. mangium – “Dust from pods pounded during seed extraction causes a respiratory reaction in some people. No hint of pollen allergies has been reported.”

A. mearnsii – “No evidence”

A. melanoxylon – No reference to pollen allergy, but noted that contact with wood can cause dermatitis.

A. nilotica (Africa and western Asia) – “No evidence”

A. parramattensis – “No evidence”

A. stenophylla – “Probably not – Seeds and pods were roasted and used by Australian Aboriginals as a food source”

For all 12 species, the assessment in relation to “Causes allergies or is otherwise toxic to humans” was given as No.

“And Mr Ferritt”

This is not a recent reference, but maybe illustrates that some things never change. In 1955, Judith Wright published a poem titled “And Mr Ferritt”. It tells the story of her neighbour, Mr Ferritt (not his real name), a miserable little man who suffered from hay fever. He blamed a wattle tree for his hay fever and so cut the tree down. However, as the poem concludes:-

“And down came the tree.
But poor Mr Ferritt
still has hay-fever,
Nothing will cure it.”

References:

1. Fay H Johnston, Ivan C Hanigan, and David M J S Bowman, Pollen Loads and Allergic Rhinitis in Darwin, Australia: A Potential Health Outcome of the Grass-Fire Cycle. EcoHealth (Published online 8 May 2009)
2. www.hear.org/Pier (accessed 24 December 2009)

Pruning of *A. leprosa* 'Scarlet Blaze'

We received the following question regarding pruning:
“I have a red-flowering Wattle (*leprosa*). It was given to me just over a year ago, and it has long pendulous branches. A while ago, I provided support for the trunk, since it seemed too thin for the weight it was carrying at the time. I now read that I should prune the tree. Could you please give me some advice on this, and the right time of year to do this? I live in Bayswater North (Vic), facing Mount Dandenong.”

Esther responded to this question as follows (note that a photograph of the plant in question was provided):

“What a gorgeous, healthy looking specimen you have. The best time to prune is immediately or soon after flowering, but most of the *Acacias* in Melbourne can still handle a good prune November/December. These are my busiest months in the garden.

As to how to trim, this depends much on what look you would like to achieve. For a small bushy effect an overall trim (just under the flowers) will have it bursting out with lush new growth in no time. On the other hand if you would like to develop more of a small tree, then simply cutting the lower branches completely off will encourage the main trunk to reach for the sky, while keeping the lovely pendulous form.”

Note: The ABC Gardening Australia episode on 21 November 2009 featured a segment by Jane Edmanson on Pruning Natives. This segment was filmed at Melbourne’s

Maranoa Gardens, and one of the plants featured was *Acacia leprosa* 'Scarlet Blaze'. In relation to this plant, Jane noted that sometimes it is important to tip prune a plant when it becomes top-heavy, otherwise it can easily just fall over and break. With the 'Scarlet Blaze', she noted that it had been recently planted, and its roots were just getting into the ground, but with its new spring growth, it really was getting a bit top-heavy. So she encouraged that 10 to 20 centimetres of tip growth be nipped off here and there. The particular plant that she pruned on the program is now looking great.

Acacia splendens

Acacia splendens occurs near Dandaragan, Western Australia, and was described as a new species in 2006 (by Maslin, B. R. and Elliot, C. P. in *Nuytsia* 16(1): 81-86). It is Declared Rare Flora (ranked as Endangered) under the WA Wildlife Conservation Act and is listed as Endangered under Commonwealth legislation.

It is a tall upright shrub or small tree, with quite large grey green phyllodes and bright golden-coloured flower heads arranged in showy racemes in May and June.



Acacia splendens, Photo Jim Barrow

Jim Barrow (WA) advises that some time ago he got some seeds of this species, which he propagated and then planted two in his garden. One plant is now 3m high (see photo) and he hopes it may flower soon. The other is rather close to a Callitris tree and only about 1m high – but it is surviving.

Jim has provided the following reference (<http://florabase.calm.wa.gov.au/browse/profile/20439>) and notes that the plants shown there seem rather more glaucous than his.

Wattle Recipe Corner

A new publication has recently (September 2009) been released by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation titled “Health Benefits of Australian Native Foods”. The 42 page report looked at 13 native herbs and spices and fresh fruit samples, one of which was Wattleseed.

Some of the findings of the report in relation to Wattleseed were:

- (a) Wattleseed was identified as a good source for three micro elements important for genome health: magnesium, zinc and calcium.
- (b) Among the herbs and spices, Wattleseed was identified as one of the richest sources of iron.
- (c) Wattleseed was one of only two foods that contained selenium, which is deficient in many soils and therefore foods (the other was Bush Tomato).
- (d) The antioxidant capacity of Wattleseed was lower than for most of the other native foods considered.

A copy of the report can be downloaded at www.rirdc.gov.au (or a printed copy purchased for \$25).

Wattle Seed Ice-cream

In this Newsletter, we thank Juleigh Robins for allowing us to include a recipe from her excellent new book, *Wild Food* (published by Penguin). Being summer, what better time than to try some Wattleseed Ice-cream! The recipe shown makes 1 litre of ice-cream.

INGREDIENTS

2 tablespoons roasted and ground wattleseed
1 litre thickened cream
6 egg yolks
½ cup castor sugar
1 tablespoon honey

METHOD

1. Bring the wattleseed and half the cream just barely to the boil.
2. While the cream is heating, beat the egg yolks and sugar with a balloon whisk until thick and creamy, but not fluffy.
3. Strain the hot cream mixture, reserving the wattleseeds.
4. Slowly whisk the hot cream into the egg mixture. Pour into a clean saucepan and set over low heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon until the custard thickens slightly and coats the back of the spoon.
5. Strain the custard, then stir in the reserved wattleseed. Cool in the coldest part of the fridge.
6. When completely chilled, add the honey and remaining cream and churn in an ice-cream machine until ready. Cover and freeze until needed.

In her book, Juleigh suggests serving the ice-cream as part of a Wattleseed espresso and Frangelico affogato.

She also makes the general comment that you must be careful to only use varieties of wattleseed with edible seeds (and she notes that these include *A. victoriae*, *A. aneura*, *A. retinodes*, *A. sophorae* and *A. pycnantha*).

Juleigh advises that interested people can purchase herbs etc on line at www.outbackspirit.com.au.

Books

by Bill Aitchison

Wattles of Tasmania

by Marion H Simmons OAM

Published 2009 Marion H Simmons,

RRP \$19.95

Marion Simmons is a former leader of the Acacia Study Group, and is still an active member of the Group. She is well known for her two volume *Acacias of Australia*, published in the 1980s, and it is wonderful that she has written a new 64 page book, *Wattles of Tasmania*.

Only 20 species of Acacia occur naturally in Tasmania, and all of these species (as well as 4 introduced species) are described and illustrated with actual size drawings. The

book also includes information on growing from seed and cuttings together with tips on planting in the garden and maintenance.

The book includes the recently described new species *Acacia derwentiana*, and also reflects the recent name changes for *A. leprosa* var. *graveolens* (previously *A. verniciflua*) and *A. uncifolia* (previously *A. retinodes* var. *uncifolia*).

**Plants of Cape York – the compact guide
by John Beasley
Published by John Beasley, August 2009, RRP
\$24.90**

This recent 240 page publication is a field guide to the flora of Cape York, and provides identifying features and information on 600 species that occur in this area, with colour photographs included for each species.

Whilst not a book devoted solely to Acacias, it is notable that 23 species of *Acacia* are included, this being more than for any other genus covered in the book.

Information provided for each species generally includes common name, distribution, brief description and general information such as commercial, Aboriginal or medicinal uses, and “quirky information from the internet, where appropriate”. An interesting and useful inclusion is specific information on 6 particular roadside stops. For example, *A. pennata* ssp. *kerrii* (Climbing Wattle) is a rare plant in Australia, found only near the tip of Cape York, but the book will guide you where to find it at one of these roadside stops.

**Collect and Grow That Seed – Small
Australian Plants
Written and published by Judy Barker, Ailsa
Campbell, Faye Candy, Peg McAllister and
Maureen Schaumann, 2009**

One of the co-authors of this recently published book, Judy Barker, is a member of the *Acacia* Study Group. Judy and her co-authors have spent a period of about 9 years growing various Australian plants from seed. This book records the results of their trials and covers 161 plants, including 8 *Acacias*. For each plant, a brief description of the plant is included (including fruit and seed) as well as information on flowering period, seed collection time and notes on propagation. The book includes illustrations by Ailsa Campbell of the fruit, seeds and cotyledons of the species included.

As well as individual plant information, there are also general sections covering topics such as Fruits, Seeds, Seed Preparation, Seed Germination, Propagation and Germination Strategies Within Families.

The authors of this book have extensive practical experience in growing Australian plants, and it is great that they have shared this experience with the publication of this book.

**A Journey to Cooper’s Creek
by Hermann Beckler
Published by Melbourne University Press,
1993**

This is an English translation of the diary of Dr Hermann Beckler, botanical collector and doctor to the Burke and Wills expedition. Although it is obviously not purely a botanical book, it does contain various references to the many plants seen by Dr Beckler on this expedition.

To *Acacia* enthusiasts, Dr Beckler is best known as the person after whom *Acacia beckleri* was named. The type specimen for this species was collected by Dr Beckler during this expedition, on 15 June 1861. In his diary he describes finding an acacia at this time as follows (his description presumably refers to what is now known as *A. beckleri*):

“At the pass-like entrance to Hobson’s basin I had already seen large numbers of a marvellous acacia on our journey out. It had large, glossy leaves and a soft, lilac colouring to its branches and twigs – a strikingly beautiful plant. The acacia was now bedecked with a mass of flowers, whose glory charmed the eye and whose almost overpowering fragrance permeated the air of this close, confined, gorge-like terrain.”

It was not until 1965 that the plant collected by Dr Beckler was formally described and named as *A. beckleri* (by Dr M D Tindale in Supplement to J M Black’s *Flora of South Australia*). Prior to this it had been mistakenly thought that the plant collected by Dr Beckler in 1861 was *A. gladiiformis*.

In another reference to acacias, Dr Beckler describes the burial of one of the members of the expedition, Charles Stone, as follows:

“At nightfall, we buried him amidst a group of charming acacias close to the bank of the waters of the Kurliatto.”

We have been advised by the publisher that this book is now out of print, but you may be able to find a second hand copy or a copy in a library.

AcaciaSearch Evaluation of Acacia as a woody crop option for southern Australia
by B R Maslin and M W McDonald
Published by Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, 2004

This publication was referred to in our Newsletter No. 91, May 2004. As noted there, it identifies, evaluates and provides detailed information for Acacia species considered prospective as new woody crop plants in the agricultural region of southern Australia.

The price of the book was noted then as being \$60. However, it may now be purchased through the RIRDC website (www.rirdc.gov.au) at a price of \$25, including postage.

This 267 page publication is excellently presented and features many colour photographs and distribution maps, and represents excellent value at \$25.

Study Group Membership

Acacia Study Group membership for 2009/10 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:
ASGAP Acacia Study Group
Membership Officer
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)

NOTE: If you have not already paid your annual membership for 2009/10, we would very much appreciate it if you could attend to this.

Seed Bank

Our thanks to Fred Mazzeferri his donation of a nice amount of *Acacia juncifolia* seed.

An updated list of species held in our Study Group's Seed Bank was included in our September 2009 Newsletter. Requests for seed should be directed to Esther.

18 packets maximum in each order (negotiable). Limit of 3 orders per member per year. Please include \$2 in stamps to cover the cost of a padded post bag and postage.

STOP PRESS (a non-acacia topic!)

Dr Dan Murphy from the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne is a member of the Acacia Study Group, and his main area of interest is Acacias.

*However, he is currently doing a non-Acacia project, relating to *Persoonia*. For this project he is trying to get samples of a number of species, and would like to make contact with anyone who has a particular interest in *Persoonia*, or who may have a collection of *Persoonia*.*

If you are able to help Dan in any way, please contact him by email at daniel.murphy@rbg.vic.gov.au.