

AUSTRALIAN NATIVE PLANTS SOCIETY (Australia) Inc.

EPACRIS STUDY GROUP

(ISSN 1038-6017)

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NEWSLETTER No. 40

SPRING 2015

Greetings to all Epacris Study Group members,

As indicated in earlier Newsletters, this will be the final Newsletter of the EPACRIS STUDY GROUP prior to the group going into recess at the Biennial Conference of the Australian Native Plants Society (Australia) Inc., in November 2015.

We do hope you have enjoyed your involvement with the Study Group and have been able to learn a little more about the genus *Epacris* from the many contributors to our Newsletters.

Thanks to all who have shared their experiences with us.

Thanks also to those who recorded the flowering times of *Epacris* in their gardens over the years. We have been able to pass this information on to a number of interested enthusiasts and researchers and it has been much appreciated.

This issue includes a brief summary of the Study group since its formation in 1992, and also provides a listing of our Newsletter "Profile Pages" over the years.

Finally there are two special colour pages, with 18 colour photographs showing the beauty and diversity within the genus of *Epacris*.

We hope you enjoy this final issue, and send very best wishes to all who have been involved in the Epacris Study Group.

May you continue to gain much enjoyment from your gardens and from belonging to the Australian Native Plants Society.

Happy gardening,

Gwen E.

NEWS and NOTES

Australia's Open Garden Scheme / Open Gardens Australia.

Times change, and one of the sad changes since our last Newsletter has been the termination of Open Gardens Australia, previously known as Australia's Open Gardens Scheme.

Numerous gardens featuring Australian native plants have been opened under the Scheme, including the garden of *Epacris* Study Group member, Shirley Carn, who liked to time the opening of her garden to be when her many *Epacris* were in bloom, thus increasing an awareness and appreciation of their value as garden plants.

The Scheme operated for 26 years and after its initial formation in Victoria it expanded to cover all Australian states.

Over the years many hundreds of gardens were opened, ideas and friendships were shared and visitors took away new inspirations for their individual home gardens. In addition some millions of dollars were donated to a wide range of charities, including public gardens, public health and essential services such as bushfire support and other relief funds.

With increasing costs in administration it was felt that the National scheme was becoming unsustainable, so the decision was made that it should be terminated from the end of June 2015.

Many were understandably upset by this decision, but happily this has resulted in a number of groups taking up the challenge to initiate new schemes, on a state level rather than the one National scheme.

A positive effect which has resulted from Open Gardens Australia is that many other organizations have come to recognise the community interest in garden visiting, and there are now many local 'Open Garden Days' organised by district groups such as schools, service groups and regional councils.

Keep an eye out for future garden openings in your area. Organisers are also usually very eager to receive additional support from keen volunteers.

The importance of Regional and State Botanic Gardens

In addition to the closure of Open Gardens Australia, we have also seen in recent times a number of long-term APS members downsizing from their large gardens to much smaller properties. In some cases the large gardens have been purchased by enthusiasts, keen to retain the plantings, but in other situations the gardens have been demolished and the property converted to higher density residential housing.

This all highlights the importance and value of our public gardens, from small regional gardens set aside by local councils to major Botanic Gardens in our State Capital cities.

In all of these areas there is certainly a "use it or lose it" philosophy. Councils and Governments are not going to set aside public money for gardens which are not appreciated and supported by the local residents who are also voters.

Many of our public gardens have active "Friends of..." groups and these also deserve whatever support we are able to give.

The 'Flora of Australia' Volume 9

We have been waiting with much anticipation over the years for Volume 9 of the FLORA OF AUSTRALIA to be published as it is listed to include the families of Epacridaceae and Ericaceae (which have of course now been combined).

The time frame for publication of this series has extended far longer than originally envisaged when Volume 1 was published in 1981, but we still look forward to the day when the volume containing *Epacris* is in our shelves.

THE EPACRIS STUDY GROUP **1992 - 2015**

The Epacris Study Group was founded in 1992, with the first Newsletter printed in September/October.

The leader was Dr. Ron Crowden, a professional Botanist and Reader in Botany at the University of Tasmania (Hobart). Ron had devoted much of the previous 20 years on the revision of the genus *Epacris* and this work, combined with his strong affinity with these plants made him an ideal person to set up the Epacris Study Group.

Ron, a school teacher, a bushwalker, gardener and field botanist became involved in the Epacrid family through his bushwalking in Tasmania.

He was assisted in the Epacris Study Group by Dick Burns, who took on the role of Secretary/Treasurer.

Both Ron and Dick grew numerous *Epacris* in their own gardens, as well as treasuring the indigenous species of the area.

Ron and Dick produced a newsletter each spring, and continued as leaders of the Study Group through to 1995.

The Epacris Study Group then went into recess for a period, following which it was re-activated by Gwen Elliot in 1998.

Newsletter No. 6 was produced in October 1998.

The topic of "Plant Profiles" was introduced, with a double-page profile included on a particular species in each issue, and this continued throughout subsequent years. Each

"Plant Profile" included a description of the species, plus notes on its distribution and cultivation. Also included was a colour photograph and in most cases a line drawing. In several issues there was also a "Profile Topic" which again occupied a double page on a particular subject related to *Epacris*. A list of the Epacris Study Group "Profile Pages" is on the reverse of this page

In early issues of the Newsletter Study Group Members were invited to fill in a survey as to which species they were growing in their own gardens.

It was obvious that various forms of *Epacris impressa* were being grown so in the Spring 2003 Newsletter a form was included to enable members to record the flowering times of the different *Epacris impressa* in different regions.

A summary of results received was printed in Autumn 2006, and a new form was included to enable members to record the flowering times of all the species of *Epacris*. Results of this survey were printed in the Autumn 2014 Newsletter.

In 2004 the family of Epacridaceae was incorporated into the larger family of Ericaceae, but the genera remained intact so the Epacris Study Group was able to continue without changes being made.

Since 1992 approximately 100 members of the Australian Plant Society have been members of the Epacris Study Group together with many others who have also been involved with the Study Group in a variety of ways. The majority of members have been Australian residents, but we have also had members residing in England, California and Switzerland.

We hope that the Study Group has been able to increase an awareness of the genus *Epacris* in the natural environment and also as desirable garden plants.

Many thanks to all who have contributed to the Epacris Study Group during the past 23 years.

Gwen Elliot

EPACRIS STUDY GROUP 'Profile Pages' 1998 - 2015

- 1998 - Spring *Epacris impressa*
 1999 - Autumn Propagation of *Epacris* from Seed
 1999 - Spring *Epacris longiflora*
 Propagation of *Epacris* from Cuttings
 2000 - Autumn The Epacridaceae family
 2000 - Spring *Epacris reclinata*
 Transportation of *Epacris* Plants and/or Cuttings
 2001 - Autumn *Epacris breviflora*
 The Cultivation of *Epacris* in Containers
 2001 - Spring *Epacris pulchella*
 2002 - Autumn *Epacris myrtifolia*
 2002 - Spring *Epacris celata*
 2003 - Autumn *Epacris robusta*
Epacris impressa - In Cultivation
 2003 - Spring *Epacris hamiltonii*
 2004 - Autumn *Epacris tasmanica* also *Epacris franklinii*
 2004 - Spring *Epacris calvertiana* var. *calvertiana*
Epacris calvertiana var. *versicolor*
 2005 - Autumn *Epacris barbata*
 2005 - Spring *Epacris virgata*
 Epacridaceae plant Tribes
 2006 - Autumn *Epacris microphylla*
 2006 - Spring *Epacris grandis*
 2007 - Autumn *Epacris purpurascens* var. *purpurascens*
Epacris purpurascens var. *onosmiflora*
 2007 - Spring *Epacris tasmanica* Complex
 When is an *Epacris* NOT an *Epacris* - *Rupicola apiculata*
 2008 - Autumn *Epacris calvertiana* var. *calvertiana* and var. *versicolor*
 2008 - Spring *Epacris lanuginosa*
 2009 - Autumn *Epacris coriacea*
 The impacts of Fire on *Epacris* plants
 2009 - Spring *Epacris marginata*
 2010 - Autumn *Epacris glacialis*
 2010 - Spring *Epacris obtusifolia*
 2011 - Autumn *Epacris* illustrations by Bill Gunn
 2011 - Spring *Epacris muelleri*
 2012 - Autumn Edible Heaths
 2012 - Spring *Epacris impressa* 'Cranbourne Bells'
 2013 - Autumn *Epacris* in cultivation, 1839 - 1908
 2013 - Spring *Epacris myrtifolia*
 2014 - Autumn Flowering Times of *Epacris*
 2015 - Autumn Key to the genus *Epacris* Labill. by R. K. Crowden

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ANNUAL REPORT - June 2015

The Epacris Study group has continued to produce Newsletters in spring and autumn. These are sent either by post or by email to Study Group members as well as to the ANPSA Study Group Co-ordinator, State Secretaries, Study Group Liaison Officers and Newsletter Editors of State member bodies of the Australian Plants Society.

Newsletters have also been sent to Botanic Gardens and Universities where research on *Epacris* is currently being undertaken. Five regional groups of the Australian Plant Society are affiliated with the Study Group and receive each Newsletter as issued.

The option of receiving Newsletters electronically was introduced in Spring 2012 and currently 50 copies are sent by email.

Having held the position of Epacris Study Group Leader since 1998, I now feel it is time to retire from the position. A number of requests have been made for someone else to take over as Leader but sadly no volunteer has been forthcoming. This unfortunately means that the Study Group will now go into recess or terminate at the next ANPSA National Conference which will be held in Canberra, in November 2015. Funds being held will be handed over to the ANPSA Executive.

Sincere thanks to all who have been involved in the Epacris Study Group since its inception in 1992.

Gwen Elliot

FINANCIAL STATEMENT for year 1.7.2014 - 30.6.2015

<u>STUDY GROUP BALANCE - as at 30.6.2014</u>		<u>\$ 935.66</u>
<u>Receipts</u>	Memberships,	\$ 130.00
	Credit Union interest	<u>\$ 4.11</u>
		\$ 134.11
<u>Expenses</u>	Newsletter printing -	\$ 129.70
	Postage,	\$ 52.50
	Credit Union charges	<u>\$ 12.50</u>
		<u>\$ 194.70</u>
	Deficit for financial year 1.7.14 - 30.6.15	- \$ 60.59
	BALANCE as per MECU (Credit Union) Statement	<u>\$ 875.07</u>
<u>Maroondah Credit Union Accounts -</u>		
	S 1 - Access Account -	Balance at 30.6.2015 \$ 328.98
	S 5 - Club Deposit Account -	Balance at 30.6.2015 \$ 546.09
	<u>Total Assets as at 30.6.2015</u>	<u>\$ 875.07</u>

A SELECTION OF COLOURFUL EPACRIS



Epacris grandis



Epacris breviflora, Cabramurra



E. purpurascens var. *purpurascens*



Epacris impressa, pink



E. impressa, 'Cranbourne Bells'



E. impressa double-flowered pink



Epacris coriacea



Epacris reclinata



Epacris lanuginosa

A SELECTION OF COLOURFUL EPACRIS



Epacris microphylla



Epacris pulchella



Epacris barbata



Epacris exserta



Epacris longiflora



Epacris longiflora, squat bells



Epacris calvertiana



Epacris virgata



Epacris muelleri