

ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING  
AUSTRALIAN PLANTS  
HIBISCUS AND RELATED GENERA STUDY GROUP  
APRIL/MAY 2006    NEWSLETTER NO 7    ISSN : 1488-1488

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Welcome to Newsletter No 7. I have had no contributions so you will have to endure my ramblings. Walter and Judy Wilcox dropped in a few days ago ex Bowen with 2 rooted cuttings of the **H. heterophyllus** from Euri creek. It is a superior form of the species and was featured on the front page of Newsletter No. 5. Walter reports that it is selling well to home gardeners in the Bowen/Townsville area. My container grown plant has recently bloomed and set seed. It is interesting to note the autumn flowering for this variety as our local **H. heterophyllus** blooms in the spring and early summer.

The cover page of this Newsletter contains a scanned image of the 5 lobed leaf of **H. sp (Barambah Creek P. Grimshaw + PG 2484)** superimposed over that of **H. splendens C. Fraser ex Graham. H. Barambah Creek** retains the lobed leaves at the apex of the plant, whilst **H. splendens** become simple ovate to lanceolate towards the apex.

**H. Barambah Creek** leaves are velvety pubescent, (as is **H. splendens**), of a smaller size; pale grey in colour. The absence of stellate hairs and aculei on any part of **H. Barambah Creek** presents an important characteristic for breeding purposes with compatible varieties and species. We have so much diverse material to work with, that I am convinced that some excellent varieties could be developed for gardening and landscaping.

Below is a list of the seedlings that I am raising for the purpose of (a) retaining fresh seed of the species and (b) experimenting with hybridising aimed at producing superior varieties in future generations. I would like to see some Study Group members involved in this project and would be pleased to help with supply of seed or plants.

### Species Seedlings.

**H. pentaphyllus** – (7) Now blooming and setting seed. Quite attractive yellow blooms. Should be treated as an annual or bi-annual. Original seed from the Northern Territory.

**H. trionum** –(43) Now blooming and setting seed, Various localities including the N.T. and Bowen Nth. Qld. Mostly the Australian ‘species’ **H. trionum var. vesicartius** with white blooms and a yellow eye-zone Should be contained as it is a pest of cultivated crops especially cotton.

**H. normanii** – (15) Vigorous seedlings. This species is regarded as uncommon.

**H. fryxellii var. fryxellii** (18) Seed came from the King Leopold Range in the Kimberleys, N.T. The first attempt to grow this species in spring 2003 resulted in virorous plants that budded up in autumn then quickly died off with the on-set of winter.

**H. species and/or natural hybrids** (78) from near Marlborough and Glen Geddes, central Qld. coastal area. Colours vary from dark pink through pale pink to yellow. About 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of them are very poor growers.

**H. heterophyllus ‘Rosie’** (30) a species or natural hybrid from near Yepoon, central Qld. coast. Very vigorous growers.

**H. heterophyllus ‘yellow’** from near Mackay Qld. Fairly weak seedlings.

**H. heterophyllus** (12) local variety from Bruce Highway verge south of Buderim.

**H. meraukensis** (16) plants from W.A., N.T. and Qld origins. A very variable species. All are full of buds as of May, 2006, and producing cleistogamic flowers only followed by seed capsules full of seed. An interesting annual for south east Qld. if planted early spring to allow development and flowering during summer.

**Radyera ferragei** (14) Some have died off, remainder are good.

**H. propulsator Craven and B.E. Pfiel** (1) formerly **Macrostelia sp. ‘Bolt Head’** – see images of parent plant bloom.

**Gossypium bickii** (7) Fair seedling growth.

**Gossypium sturtianum var nandewareense** (30) Quite vigorous growth.

**H. radiatus (38)** now in bloom. The seedlings grown from SGAP seed bank have paler flowers than the Nth. Qld. dark purple 'variety'. Very showy when grown as an annual.

**Decaschistia peninsularis** – nil germination.

**H. astrinus (1)** vigorous seedling – (formerly included in **H. panduriformis** complex) Seedlings grown in spring 2003 bloomed in summer and autumn, quickly declining with the onset of winter. Very common on Wave Hill Station (sth. of Victoria River Downs) during my visit – May/June 2005. Does not appear to be grazed by livestock.

**H. hirtus (6)** The original plants were acquired from a Brisbane Nursery and were probably raised from seed ex- sth.- east Asia – Thailand. This species or a very similar one may occur in the Kimberley region of W.A.

#### **Cross Pollinations :**

'Rosie' x **H. Barambah Creek (20)** vigorous seedlings.

'Rosie' x 'Brick Red' (3)

'Rosie' x Mackay yellow **H. heterophyllus (7)** vigorous seedlings.

'Rosie' x **H. heterophyllus** ex Glen Geddes (3)

**H. Barambah Creek** x 'Rosie' (6) strong seedlings

'Rosie' x ('Brick Red' x **H. splendens** ex Fairhill Nursery) (7)

'Rosie' x **H. splendens** ex Mt. Tinbeerwah), Sunshine Coast (12) strong seedlings.

**H. heterophyllus** Mackay Yellow x **H. Barambah Creek (1)**

**H. Barambah Creek** x **H. heterophyllus** Mackay Yellow (2)

**H. heterophyllus** Mackay Yellow x **H. meraukensis (1)** This is a difficult cross to obtain and the vigorous seedling is now in bud. It will be interesting to see if the flowers are cleistogamic as with the parent **H. meraukensis**. To date , 8/5/06, we have experienced no day time temperatures below 25 degrees celcius or night temperatures below 12 degrees celcius one would assume that the condition is related to reduced day light length. It was observed during May/June 2005 that **Gossypium australe** on the Barkly Tablelands had a high percentage of cleistogamic flowers.

'Apricot Mist' x **H. meraukensis (7)** Strong seedlings.

**H. heterophyllus** Mackay Yellow x (B-02 seedling – 'Apricot Mist' x 'Rose Pink') (1)

'Wirruna' x **H. splendens (2)**

'Wirruna' x **H. Baramba Creek (12)**

**H. heterophyllus** Mackay Yellow x (AK-02) – Apricot Mist x Brick Red (10) The seedling Apricot Mist x Brick Red code - (Ak-02) has a long flowering season with tomato red blooms. The plant is upright to about 1.5m tall.

#### **PROPOSED SPRING FIELD TRIP**

This was proposed for last year but had to be cancelled due to drought conditions and absence of David and Olive Hockings from their nursery at Maleny. The best time slot is about mid October when the native species can be seen at their peak blooming. I will talk to David and Olive to arrange a time suitable to them and then proceed to Fairhill Native Plant Nursery via various Hibiscus habitats. There is a good restaurant at Fairhill where we can have lunch.

As I will be absent on a field trip to inland Qld. during this coming June, the next newsletter will be prepared in July with details of the Field Trip.

#### **SUMMARY OF SEED RAISING PROCEDURE**

Seed are thoroughly dried out and kept in glass jars with identification label and silica gel.

Seed for the current crop of seedlings (see above) were planted as from 12/12/05. Glass jars were filled with hot tap water, about 85 degrees celcius and left to soak for 24 hours. Commercial seed raising mix was soaked with bleach – about 5% in water and germinating pots for seedlings soaked in bleach – about 10% in water. (This is done to prevent damping off and has proved to be very effective in the past) Good germination commenced 13/12/05 in communal pots and was mostly complete by 16/12/05. Weather conditions at the time were very hot (above 30 degrees celcius) with high humidity. About half of the seed was collected in 2002, hence was more than 3 years old. Some seed batches such as *H. sturtii* failed to germinate – perhaps due to the high humidity. Seedlings were potted on into 6 inch pots after they had reached the 3 leaf stage using commercial potting mix and a small amount of slow release fertilizer formulated for native plants.

Seed  
germinating  
in community  
pot.  
23/12/05



*H. propulsator*  
Container  
grown  
at Budetim  
December 2005



**Norfolk Island Hibiscus :**

Members of our Study Group may find the following of interest :

[http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/npws.nsf/Content/Lagunaria\\_swamp\\_forest\\_endangered](http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/npws.nsf/Content/Lagunaria_swamp_forest_endangered)

Lagunaria swamp forest on Lord Howe Island – endangered ecological community listing

NSW Scientific Committee – final determination

The Scientific Committee, established by the threatened Species Conservation Act, has made a Final Determination to list Lagunaria Swamp Forest on Lord Howe Island, as an ENDANGERED ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITY in Part 3 of Schedule 1 of the Act.

The Scientific Committee has found that :

1. Lagunaria Swamp Forest is confined to Lord Howe Island in New South Wales. On the island it is restricted to the lowlands area, which has largely been cleared for settlement. The major canopy dominant, **Lagunaria patersonia subsp. patersonia** is confined to Lord Howe Island and Norfolk Island. **Lagunaria patersonia subsp. bracteatus** occurs in Queensland. All **Lagunaria patersonia** plants in mainland New South Wales are introduced.
2. Lagunaria Swamp Forest on Lord Howe Island is a forest 10-15m tall dominated by **Lagunaria patersonia subsp. patersonia**, sometimes growing with **Hibiscus tileaceus** and **Myoporum insulare**. Shrubs are generally sparse and may include **Aegiceras corniculatum**, **Cryptocarya triplinervis** and **Celtis conferta subsp. amblyphylla**. The groundcover may include **Cyperus lucidus**, **Commelina cyanea** and **Hydrocotyle hirta**, and is generally sparse where the tree canopy is intact, but may be denser on edges and where the tree canopy has been disturbed

**Macrostelia :**

This genus of Malvaceous shrubs is known from two localities – tropical northern Queensland and the eastern littoral rainforests of Madagascar. The three taxa from Madagascar are **Macrostelia calyculata Hochr.**, **Macrostelia involucrata** and **Macrostelia laurina (Baill) Hochr. & Humbert**

A few years ago I purchased, from a native plant nursery, a plant labeled **Macrostelia sp. Bolt Head**. An image of the bloom from this particular plant appears on page 3 under its new scientific name – **Hibiscus propulsator Craven & B. E. Pfeil**.

Following is the abstract by L.A. Craven and B.E. Pfeil concerning transfer of the Australian **Macrostelia** to the **Hibiscus** genus : ref. ADANSONIA, ser. 3 \* 2004 \* 26 (2) : 235-240

**Title :** **Australian representatives of *Macrostelia* transferred to (*Hibiscus*) Malvaceae, with the description of a new species**

**Abstract**

The Australian species of **Macrostelia** fall within the circumscription of **Hibiscus** and the two taxa are transferred to the latter genus. A new species is described. Three new names are proposed : **H. tozerensis Craven and B.E. Pfeil** (based on **M. grandiflora Fryxell**), **H. macilwraithensis (Fryxell) Craven & B.E. Pfeil** (based on **M. grandiflora subsp macilwraithensis Fryxell**), and **H. propulsator Craven & B.E. Pfeil** (for the new species)

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