

ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS

VERTICORDIA STUDY GROUP ISSN-0811-5346

NEWSLETTER NO 25 -- FEBRUARY 1996

MEMBERSHIP

The following new Study Group Members are warmly welcomed :-

Gay Bennison, 30 Zouch Street, Wellington, N.S.W. 2820

Brett Hall, Manager, Arboretum, U.C.S.C., Santa Cruz, California 95064

Jeanette Murray, "Yongarra", MSF 2006, Rockvale Road, Armidale, N.S.W. 2350

Gay is employed at Burrendong Arboretum where she has taken a special interest in the *Verticordia* collection and her enthusiasm has now prompted her personal membership

Brett Hall says he is very keen to grow more *Verticordias* and learn about their cultivation requirements. We will certainly be very interested to hear, in due course, of his *Verticordia*-wise achievements in California

Jeanette, in a brief note, says she is particularly interested in *Verticordias* but is having difficulty in acquiring seed. She is currently seeking seed of *Verticordias plumosa* and *picta*. She did not state if she proposes to try out propagation by smoke treatment, but if so we will be particularly interested to hear of her results as some favourable reports are now starting to come through.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The subscription rates of \$3.00 annually and \$10.00 for overseas members, which have been maintained since the formation of the Study Group in 1983 remain unchanged. The subscription year runs from 1st. July to 30th. June

Are you financial for the current 1995/96 period ? If a statement showing the last payment received from you is attached to this Newsletter **your early attention would be appreciated.**

DONATIONS

The following donations in excess of the Nominal Subscription are gratefully acknowledged:-

Gay Bennison	\$5.00
Max Ewer	4.00
Kay Owens	2.00
David Randall	2.00
Norm and Pat Moyle	4.00
Gordon Curtis	4.00
SGAP Queensland Region	20.00
SGAP New Englang Region	7.00
SGAP N.S.W. Region	27.00
SGAP Geelong Group	2.00

CULTIVATION NOTES

Kerrie Rathie, Greenbank, Queensland, has sent the following brief update, (8/95).

"I still have *Verticordia densiflora* doing very well on its own roots on my gravel mound, and *Verticordia staminosa* looking well but growing very slowly.

I have recently added *Vert. drummondii*, *Vert. brownii* and *Vert. cooloomia* to the mound; *Vert. drummondii* having done the best of the three.

In a raised sandy bed *Vert. chrysantha* and *Vert. mitchelliana*, both grafted on to *Darwinia citriodora* are both doing well as also, on their own roots, are a robust *Vert. plumosa* and a *Vert. affin. plumosa*".

The above report is of particular significance as Kerrie, from coastal Queensland, is breaking new ground in *Verticordia* cultivation in that area. With summer rainfall conditions even more extreme than for central and southern coastal N.S.W. areas, it could reasonably be expected that pathogen control measures would assume major significance.

I note his use of elevated beds which undoubtedly would contribute to better plant maintenance. We will also watch with interest, the acceptance by particular species, of the gravel or sandy soil types.

His growing of *Vert. mitchelliana* is of very special interest as this species has generally been difficult to maintain through late summer and autumn in near-coastal, summer-wet areas in South-east Australia.

Follow-up reports from Kerrie will be of special interest.

From **Burrendong Arboretum** in mid-western N.S.W, the following comments, (8/95).

<i>Verticordia chrysanthella</i> -----	good
<i>Verticordia pennigera</i> -----	good and tenacious.
<i>Verticordia drummondii</i> -----	good and tenacious.
<i>Verticordia plumosa</i> -----	good and tenacious.
<i>Verticordia longistylis</i> -----	good and tenacious
<i>Verticordia multiflora ssp. multiflora</i> -----	fair
<i>Verticordia densiflora</i> -----	fair.

The comment 'fair', with regard to *Verticordia multiflora* does not surprise me. Although the species has proved reasonably tenacious in Sydney in a range of soil types including mounded broken sandstone, light sand and medium to heavy loam, it has not to date been grown with the compact floral appearance we have come to expect from some *Verticordia* species, even given judicious pruning. I note however that Alex. George, in his revision of the genus, describes it as a small shrub with "± straggly spreading stems". Sydney performances certainly fit this description.

Graham Eastwood, Batemans Bay, N.S.W. South Coast, (11/95), sends the following update

"Two grafted *Vert. monadelpha* are approaching full flowering.

Two *Vert. cooloomia* are quite healthy and have flowered but have not grown from last year. I expect they will move from now on.

Vert. fragrans has just had a few flowers

Vert. venusta, *acerosa* and *citrella* have already flowered

Vert. staminosa subsp. cylindracea var. erecta is now really growing up and had

“a million” flowers from the end of June till October.

Other species, as yet small, but healthy and coming out of their winter dormancy with vigour are *Vert. drummondii* and *attenuata*.”

I am following the progress of Grahams *Verticordias* with interest as he adheres strictly to certain cultivation procedures. Refer to Newsletter No 23 for full details. His soil is rather heavy in texture and his growing philosophy is based upon achieving natural growth without artificial stimulants such as watering, fertilising etc. Pre-planting preparation, time of planting, planting procedure, judicious pruning are all subjects he feels strongly about, as also is the desirability of allowing plants their natural rest or dormancy period

I recently, (Jan. 96), had opportunity to personally inspect Grahams garden and I must report that the cultural procedures he has adopted certainly seem to have produced extremely good results. As well as *Verticordias*, many other plant species that I would have considered difficult to maintain in summer-wet areas are now four years or so old and looking very well. The fact that his soil is heavy clay loam, also warrants special note.

Graham commented that he prefers his plants to settle in slowly making slow early growth. He feels apprehensive when specimens move away too quickly after planting

I was surprised at the severity of his pruning. Apart from initial pruning at the pre-planting and planting stages, as described in N/L 23, old growth is removed annually after flowering, so that new seasonal growth is encouraged from lower plant regions. While Graham admits to loss of an occasional specimen, such losses are far outweighed by the many very satisfactory results. I look forward to my next visit to his garden to note further development.

David Randall, Cobram, north-eastern Victoria, in a brief note, (9/95), says:-

“Over the long dry summer a few of my *Verticordias* died, viz. *Vert. densiflora* var. *cespitosa*, *Vert. grandiflora*, *Vert. huegelii* and a plant of *Vert. plumosa* which had been overgrown by *Grevillea nana*.

The rest are still growing O.K. considering the long dry summers and bad frosty winters of the last two years. Actually my *Verticordias* have fared better than some other plant genera, such as *Dryandra* and *Eremophila*.”

(Refer also to later comment in this Newsletter)

Gordon Brooks, Castle Hill, N.S.W. (11/95) reports that after achieving good results with *Verticordias chrysanthella* and *plumosa* he is now encouraged to enlarge his *Verticordia* collection.

Gordons soil type; skeletal bush sand of sandstone origin, is located over homogenous sandstone. Although natural moisture on the rock shelf is available to the plants for a little while after rain, and even though both of the above species are reasonably tolerant of varying soil types, dry seasonal weather periods tend to be reflected by plant performances as the soil itself tends to dry out rather quickly.

After noting plant responses to varying soil types since the formation of the Study Group, I have formed an opinion, that for many *Verticordia* species, soils which might be described as loams of medium texture are likely to yield best growth results. Their moisture holding capacity is better than for light sands, while drainage potential is generally still reasonable

The above comment must of course be tempered, particularly in the more difficult conditions of summer rainfall areas, by considerations of pathogen control, which may assume priority over growth potential as influenced by soil type. It must also be appreciated that the

natural form of root development of some species, (shallow or deeply penetrating), may override considerations in the selection of appropriate soil type.

Members will have noted my comments on favoured soil types for many species in the most recent issue of "Australian Plants". As noted, this was based to a large extent upon cultivation experiences in the summer-wet regions of Eastern Australia. The conclusions noted nevertheless should have general application. It is necessary however, that all Active Study Group members throughout Australia; even if only one or two species are grown, assess and contribute their observations on a periodic basis, so that the preferences, I have stated, can be confirmed or disputed.

Members will recall, a report two years ago in Newsletter No.21. from **Ernie Koch**, of the Sydney suburb of Matraville, which detailed fully, his preparation and planting procedures of two specimens of *Vert. grandis*. I have been following the progress of these with interest, as early results seemed quite good. I noted his comment at the time that they did not appear to suffer any set-back on planting out; which was in late July 93, and that they continued to flower well. On several subsequent visits, I noted that they continued to do well and were, in fact, making better progress than two older specimens in a gravel section of my own garden. Ernie has now reported that both deteriorated during last winter and are currently, (1/96), completely defoliated. While I was tempted, at the time, to remove them to make an assessment of their root structures to ascertain if they had been affected by pathogen attack, I suggested rather, that he leave them in situ, in case they should throw new growth from below ground.

In this regard I recall, on occasion, removing an apparently dead specimen from my own garden, only to find a new small shoot starting to grow away from below ground. Although I promptly repotted the plant, it did not survive.

From this point I propose to indulge myself with a little supposition.

(a)- Let us assume that both plants are dead. A dryer than normal climatic situation has prevailed in Sydney for the last two years or so. particularly in the prime growing periods of winter and spring. Ernie's soil is sandy and well drained and normally has good capillary moisture on shelf rock at about one metre. Except on planting out, his plants are not watered artificially. Could it be then that under the seasonal conditions noted the above plants, although flowering well, may have suffered from lack of adequate water at this early stage of their development? I note that they had received regular watering in the 45cm deep tubes prior to planting out and that the roots had reached the bottom of these tubes..

(b)- My second surmise is prompted by a comment from Dick Mills, reported in Newsletter No. 22. where he found that, by adding more fertiliser at the potting stage, he was able to overcome post-strike dormancy, a growth characteristic which has been noted with this species on occasion. I note that Ernie's initial potting mix was comprised 50/50 of coarse river sand and proprietary potting mix. A little garden lime was added to adjust pH, trace elements, a little low phosphorus Osmocote. and fortnightly applications of weak Hormone 20. A little lime was also added to the garden bed with a little pelletised poultry manure. Could it be that the preplanting and garden bed preparation had encouraged good early development but that after a time; in this case two years, the plants had used up all of the available nutrient or other additives and had suffered accordingly? If this is the case, perhaps the species may respond favourably to regular applications of fertiliser in the establishment period.

As noted above by Dick Mills, this species frequently tends to stagnate in growth, after potting on. Perhaps also a little more assistance after planting out may be appropriate.

To further support a case for providing some additional help in the establishment period, a comment from Gordon Curtis; Newsletter No. 13, reported that two *Vert. grandis*,

planted two years earlier, had just managed to survive until treated with heavy applications of iron. Following this they both responded favourably and were expected to flower.

What can you other Study Group Members add to the story of *Vert. grandis*?

Getting Back to Ernies garden, the report is not without a bright side. Among his other plants, *Vert. hughanii* has responded very well to his conditions as has also *Vert. lindleyi* subsp. *purpurea*.

"PILGRIMAGE" 1995.

On the 18th. September last, I set out, in company with Ted Newman and Ernie Koch, for yet another tour of Western Australia. (My last visit had been in 1984). We had considered making the trip a year earlier, in 1994, but we had postponed it as weather reports at that time indicated widespread drought conditions. We had a reason for starting the trip a little later in the season than some travellers may consider desirable. The greatest variety of *Verticordia*, in which, of course, we all had special interest, flower from late spring through early summer, and many early spring visitors therefore, only see a limited coverage of the genus. The time selected turned out very well for most areas visited. Although the Western Australian season generally was a little "patchy", a few places being still a little on the dry side, some areas were really magnificent

We travelled through Broken Hill, (exceptionally dry), and the Eyre Highway to Norseman and thence to Coolgardie. From there to Southern Cross. (through Boorabbin National Park and on to Yellowdine) the roadside scene was certainly better than I had seen on previous occasions, probably as a result of the flooding in the Goldfields area which had occurred in the previous February. For Ted in particular, on his initial visit to W.A., it was an outstanding introduction to many new plant species in full flower, not the least spectacular of which was the brilliant *Balaustion pulcherrimum*.

Vert. picta was one of the first of that genus noted, and over the whole trip, which occupied just on two months, we all agreed that this plant took the prize as the most outstanding individual *Verticordia* specimen. It was about 45cm diameter, 30cm high, and hemispherical in growth form, rather than erect as more frequently seen. The flower colour was deep pink and the profusion of flowers so great that the foliage was completely hidden. Although I had appreciated that this species had a reasonably long flowering period, (specimens in my own garden having flowered onwards from early July), I was surprised to find it in full flower throughout the whole duration of the trip and over such a widely distributed area.

Along this stretch of roadway there was, of course, no shortage of yellows, *Vert. chrysantha* being the most outstanding, but *Vert. roei* ssp. *meiogona*, with its pinkish centres was also a most striking species. The same species was also at its peak and grew in profusion on Mary and John Squires property at Muckinbudin, which we visited on the next stage of our trip. Here also among many others of the genus, was *Vert. auriculata*, not yet in flower, but loaded with buds. From the growth form, similar to that of the *Vert. picta* noted above, and from the lushness of foliage and profusion of buds almost ready to open I could imagine the spectacle this beautiful species was about to present.

Our next stage took us through Koorda, where *Darwinia purpurea*, the spectacular "Koorda Rose", was at its best, and on through Cadoux to Wongan Hills where we stationed

for several days. South of Cadoux extensive stands of *Vert. chrysanthella* in apparently shallow soil areas associated with granite outcropping dominated the landscape in places. At Kondut, a little north of Wongan Hills, we visited the Reynoldson Wildflower Reserve to be greeted by the greatest concentration of *Vert. monadelpha* var. *monadelpha* one could imagine, spread over several hectares, where it was almost a monoculture. Many compact shrubs would have been two metres in diameter and although we were about two or three weeks ahead of the full flowering flush, the scene was certainly breathtaking. In this reserve also, although rather unobtrusive because of the dominance of the above, were about six other species of *Verticordia* just starting to flower, or in early preparation for same, including *Vert. eriocephala* and *Vert. venusta*.

Also, while in the Wongan hills area, we visited the property of Basil and Mary Smith at Manmanning, where we were very interested to examine their *Verticordia* plantings which are being monitored closely and have been referred to on occasion by Elizabeth George. In a fully open situation on this rural property, exposed to extreme weather conditions in both winter and summer, the plants receive no attention except for seasonal pruning to contain them to a more compact form. With possibly one or two exceptions, where previous drought conditions had probably been the cause, the plants were doing remarkably well and included *Vert. dasystylis* and a form of *Vert. plumosa*, both of which I would have expected might have found the recent seasonal conditions a little severe taking into consideration their areas of natural distribution and soil type.

Also growing naturally on an uncleared section of this property were *Verticordia endlicheriana* var. *compacta*, sometimes referred to as "Yellow Cauliflower" and the beautiful deep pink or red form of *Vert. brachypoda*. As might also be expected *Vert. picta* and *Vert. chrysanthella* were common, while adjacent to their home a plant of *Vert. chrysantha*, which had been badly damaged when their home had been built some 37 years earlier was still putting on its annual floral display. The above plant is of special interest as the species as described, does not develop a lignotuber.

After Wongan Hills we journeyed through Badgingarra; where *Vert. nobilis* was beginning to make its presence felt, to our next port of call, beautiful Eneabba. We had heard in advance that the season there was particularly good and we were not disappointed. *Vert. grandis*, was putting on its usual grand display and among the many other *Verticordia* flowering we found large stands of *Vert. laciniata*, *Vert. brachypoda*, and the brilliant *Vert. aurea*. A stand of the latter grew in close association with *Vert. argentea*, which had just started to open its striking pink and silver flower spikes. Another species which I had not seen previously in its natural habitat was *Vert. penicillaris*. Growing in a rather low and damper area with shallow soil near granite outcroppings. The profusion of small prostrate mounds covered in creamy-yellow flowers with tall erect styles presented a very striking appearance. The beautiful *Vert. ovalifolia*, of course was also frequently noted but I cannot refrain from commenting also on the plentiful, deep pink *Scholtzia laxiflora* and stands of the scarlet *Lechenaultia hirsuta*.

On a diversion to Three Springs we found *Vert. centipeda* with flowers just starting to open and the large flowered *Vert. insignis* ssp. *eiomagis*.

Leaving Eneabba we went across to Latham and then up to Perenjori. The wildflower season between the latter two towns was also particularly good. *Vert. monadelpha* var. *monadelpha* was compact, frequent and brilliant and of course the usual yellows and *Vert. picta* kept stopping our vehicles. A few other species showed up however on this section

which were a little unexpected to me, including *Vert. rennieana*, and *Vert. venusta*, both with flower buds just commencing to open and *Vert. auriculata* with flowering a little further advanced. This latter species grew as a multibranched shrub to about 50cm tall rather than with the very compact growth form noted earlier at Mukinbudin.

With Mullewa as our next centre we travelled to Geraldton, thence to Walkaway and part of the Burma Road and back via Casuarinas. *Verticordia* were well represented but the species were similar to those seen previously. The same story applied to a diversion towards Pindar, where furthermore the season was a little on the dry side.

Leaving Mullewa we passed through Yuna, Northampton and Binu before locating on the Murchison River where, with temperatures creeping up we were pleased to be able to take to the water and cool down a bit. With this area near the River also a little dry, *Vert. etheliana* var. *formosa* was rather poor and in any case the flowering virtually finished, we moved on north to Eurardy Pastoral Station with Wildflower seasonal conditions again on the improve. *Vert. spicata* subsp. *spicata* was beginning to show up although we were a little early to see this beautiful species in full flower. Another very striking white 'Cauliflower' was at its best. At the time I considered it to be *Vert. polytricha* but on later reflection wondered whether it could have been *Vert. capillaris*. At Eurardy Station we were pleased to accept the hospitality of Bruce and Margaret Quicke by way of a four wheel drive tour of a 300 acre section they have retained in its virgin state. Apart from the usual yellows and more *Vert. picta* we were introduced to *Vert. dichroma* var. *dichroma* and *Vert. x eurardyensis*, the recently described stable hybrid between the above varieties of *Vert. dichroma* and *Vert. spicata*. Another most striking plant in full flower was *Vert. etheliana* var. *etheliana*. It is my personal ambition to grow this species to that standard.

The area north of Eurardy Station, towards Bilabong, was enjoying a particularly good season and again the very striking *Vert. dichroma* var. *dichroma* with its large rich bronze-maroon flower spikes on two metre tall shrubs presented a commanding appearance. In this area also, we found *Vert. oculata*. Although we were a little early to see most plants in full flower we were fortunate to find one specimen in a more exposed location with at least 50% of its large purplish-silver flowers open. It was very lush in growth and virtually prostrate to about 60cm diameter. Because the flowers were so numerous and large in size they almost concealed the foliage.

Turning south again our next station was Kalbarri. The area generally was quite good and with many *Verticordia* species, but mostly ones we had become used to seeing elsewhere. Deep-pink and compact *Vert. monadelpha* var. *callitricha* however was certainly a sight to behold. One lasting thought of the road into this area however was for the never-ending avenue of *Grevillea leucopteris* in full flower

Leaving Kalbarri we wasted little time on the trip south to Perth, but we were surprised by the large stand of *Vert. nitens* near Regans Ford. While I had seen an occasional plant on a previous occasion, I had not seen the species growing in such profusion. The flowers however, and then only on a few of the shrubs, were just starting to open and the finished picture had to be left to the imagination.

We took the time in Perth to check out a few of our Study Groupers. First up was Elizabeth George. Elizabeth as you know, is working extremely hard on her "Verticordia Book" and she felt it necessary to apologise for the state of her garden which had suffered a little through lack of recent attention. I was amazed however at the growth she has achieved in

such a short space of time. Members will remember that she only moved into the new home in August 1989. She herself admitted that she had been surprised by the growth rate particularly of some of the larger shrubs, which now will need some containment or even, in a few cases removal. A large number of *Verticordia* were in flower and seemed to appreciate growing among the large pieces of stone she had imported to help them in the sandy soil. What did impress me particularly however, was the growth of a *Vert. grandis*. Over a metre tall with arching branches it was not only flowering very well but the foliage appeared so robust and in such good colour.

Our next visit was to John and Judy Grown at Parkerville. Members will have noted Judys regular reports on the progress of their extensive *Verticordia* collection. Early last year however, John suffered some serious ill health from which, fortunately, he has since registered a very good recovery. Subsequently also, he broke a leg from falling over a chair, which has left him with a slight limp, but of which he makes light. With things on the up and up now however, I am sure their *Verticordias* can look forward to even greater attention. That is not to infer that they have been neglected as many are doing very well. A robust specimen of *Vert. etheliana* var. *etheliana* in particular, was in full flower. They have also been experimenting with the smoke treatment for seed germination and report some successes.

Another most interesting garden was that of Dick Mills at Banjup. From reports it would be noted that Dicks garden is relatively new and still in process of development. In deep, light grey, sandy soil he uses trickle irrigation extensively and with the dry summer climatic conditions of the region, elevating of beds is not a cultivation requirement. He has a wide range of *Verticordia* and other showy species doing particularly well and with plants graded in size to obviate excessive competition from larger species the garden is now and will surely become an even greater showpiece for Australian plants. In a section near the front of the house I was particularly impressed with specimens of *Vert. pulchella* which were very dense, to about 10cm high and spreading to approx. 45 cm diameter. Among many other very interesting species in full flower in another area were *Vert. fimbriolepis* subsp. *australis*, and a spreading form of *Vert. mitchelliana*. The flowers on a very robust *Vert. cooloomia* were about to open.

Last on our social calendar for Perth area was something I have looked forward to for a very long time, a visit to Norm and Pat Moyles extensive garden at Mandurah. Despite some health problems in recent times, which hopefully are by now merely history, they have been able to maintain things in pretty good shape, and as you would have noted from the recent edition of "Australian Plants" are cultivating "about 130 species, subspecies and varieties of *Verticordia*, of which 50 have seeded in". How can I do justice to such an effort, or select one or two species for special mention? On all sides were flowering examples to warm the heart of a *Verticordia* enthusiast. Many plants of *Vert. chrysanthella* and *Vert. monadelphica* were at their best and as an introduction, in an elevated patio edge situation were a number of very floriferous specimens including a large *Vert. pulchella*. They must certainly warrant special congratulations for their efforts in breaking ground with what many in the past have considered a difficult genus to maintain in cultivation.

One further excursion from the Perth base. took us down the Brookton highway to Brookton, thence to Beverly and home through York. From a *Verticordia* point of view this was not prime terrain although occasional yellows and *Vert. plumosa* were in evidence. We did however come upon a large stand of *Vert. huegelii* var. *decumbens* and a few plants of a yellow-flowered species which I believe was *Vert. huegelii* var. *stylosa*. Perhaps the highlight

of the day however was the sight of a previously burned forest area with virtually acres of the floor covered with blue *Lechenaultia biloba*.

Leaving Perth we travelled south to Augusta, thence through Pemberton, Walpole and Albany to the Stirling Range. Much of this was forest country and very interesting but contained nothing special to report with regard to *Verticordia*. The Stirling Range itself was rather dry and I believe we were a little late in any case for the best flowering. Just north of the Range it was still rather dry but we did however come upon stands of several yellows I had not encountered before, viz., *Vert. coronata* and *Vert. subulata*. I was also surprised to find the paler yellow *Vert. multiflora* subsp. *multiflora*.

Carrying on northwards the seasonal climatic conditions began to improve with *vert. chrysanthella*, *Vert. picta* and *Vert. eriocephala* coming into the picture again and also *Vert. grandiflora* and what I believe was *Vert. insignis* subsp. *insignis*. It was not until we reached Pingrup however, when we came upon the first specimens of *Vert. roei* subsp. *roei* among seven or eight other species, including of course good specimens of *Vert. picta* and *Vert. chrysantha*, that we knew we had made the correct decision to continue north. To Lake Grace and on to Newdegate the verge conditions were becoming extremely good.

From Newdegate we took a round trip past Lake Bidy, thence to North Burngup, and finally through South Burngup and back to base. The North Burngup area was very good with *Vert. roei* subsp. *roei* outstanding among many other *Verticordia* species. It was not until we reached a section along the South Burngate Road however that our breath was literally taken away. In a very large area of at least several hectares, which had regrown, after gravel extraction, to not more than waste height, was the greatest wildflower spectacle that I have ever been fortunate enough to see, (and I had to be out of camera film). There were at least seven or eight species of *Verticordia*, most dominant of which was undoubtedly *Vert. roei* subsp. *roei*, with literally thousands of its large paper white heads. The yellows of *Vert. chrysantha* and deep golden *Vert. integra* and the pinks of *Vert. picta* and several species coming into flower which I did not recognise, contrasted with blue *Lechenaultia biloba* and myriads of other flowering species. One could have spent days just examining and drooling over the scene but it was surely a sight to be remembered.

From Newdegate we went on to Lake King and beyond to the Frank Hahn National Park. The season generally was good but after the experience of South Burngate it was in the nature of an anticlimax. The species generally were similar to the above but not quite in the same magnificent condition. In this area however, we did come upon several small plants of *Vert. humilis*.

Our next station was through Ravensthorpe and Esperance to Orleans Bay. Near Cape Arid National Park we located plants of *Vert. brownii* coming into bud. Also near the seashore in the same park we found what I could scarcely believe; A plant of red-flowered *Lechenaultia formosa* which had grown to more than two metres in diameter. The stem at ground level was of the order of four cm thick. In this area also, grew a lot of *Vert. plumosa* with whitish flowers. Also common in the area was *Lechenaultia tubiflora* in varying colours from cream to red. Near Cape le Grand we located stands of *Vert. vicinella* but it being months before its flowering time, this was merely of academic interest.

It was now time to turn for home. Acting on local advice from the area we decided to be a little adventurous, and bypassing Esperance and Norseman, travelled direct to Balladonia via the Parmango "Road". Florally the trip was relatively uneventful but if weather conditions

had been wetter in the previous few weeks it could have been quite hazardous. It did save a lot of kilometers, however and a day or so in travelling time, which we were able to use to advantage on the way home to check out a few other Study Groupers.

Our next port of call was to Jeff Jones at Banksia Park in South Australia. Jeff had recently suffered some misfortune, which, to us, turned out to be a stroke of good luck. Having recently fallen from a ladder, cracking a rib, he happened to be home from work when we made the visit. Jeff is cultivating a very wide range of Australian plants including many *Verticordia*. *Vert. crebra* was one such species doing very well but what really took our eye was the tallest specimen of *Vert. grandis* I have had the fortune to see. It was erect in growth form, flowering, and would have been approximately 2.5 metres tall. According to Jeff it grew in deep sand. I recall his comments in an earlier report where he said he had found it desirable to use trickle watering in dry summer conditions because of the freely draining nature of the sand.

After our exploration of Jeff's garden we next called on Gordon Curtis at Happy Valley, South Australia. Here again we were greeted with a vast array of well-grown Australian species with many *Verticordia* interspersed, including several very healthy flowering specimens of pink *Vert. halophila*. I recall an earlier report from Gordon regarding his planting procedure in his heavy clay soil whereby he introduces some sand into the planting area. His results certainly speak for themselves. He also maintains a further extensive selection of *Verticordia* in large containers.

Our final Member visit on the way home was to David Randall's garden at Cobram, Victoria. (Refer also to Cultivation Notes elsewhere in this Newsletter). Despite David's comments on his difficulties from recent seasonal weather patterns I can assure Study Group Members that his garden was in very good shape. His comments in earlier Newsletters regarding his practice of pre-staging specimens before planting out, into soil of his own garden type and of later, growing in elevated beds, seemed certainly to be justified by results. In particular, a small plant of *Vert. plumosa* took my attention. Growing in full sun it was about 45cm diameter, dense and hemispherical in form to about 15cm tall, the foliage virtually obscured by the profuse flowering. It must obviously have been pruned to this form, so I resolved then and there, that my own garden would, in future, receive much greater use of the secateurs.

And so to home after a very enjoyable trip. One final statistic; During the whole tour we only experienced one wet day.

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