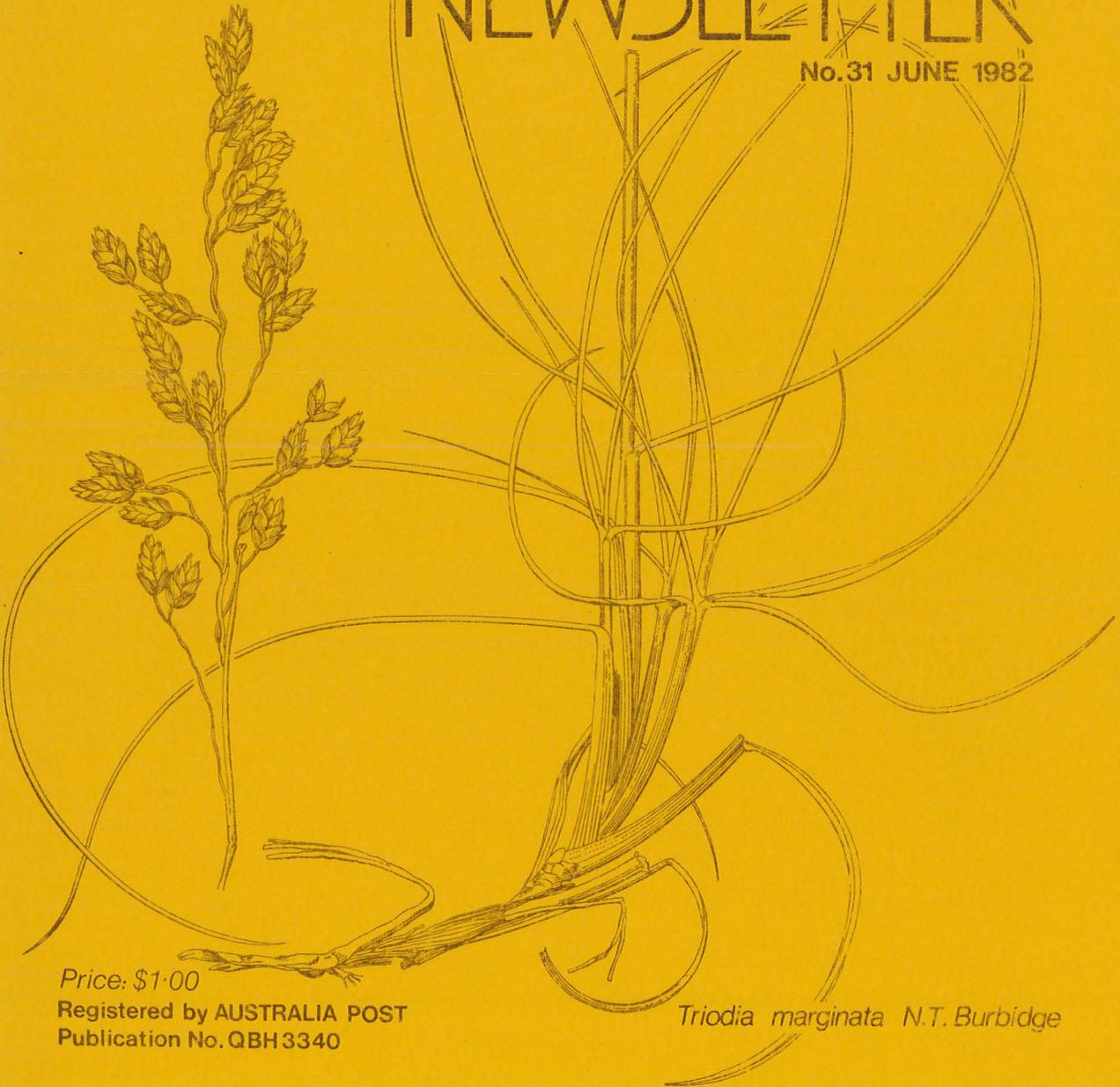


BS = 250 x 175



Australian Systematic  
Botany Society  
NEWSLETTER

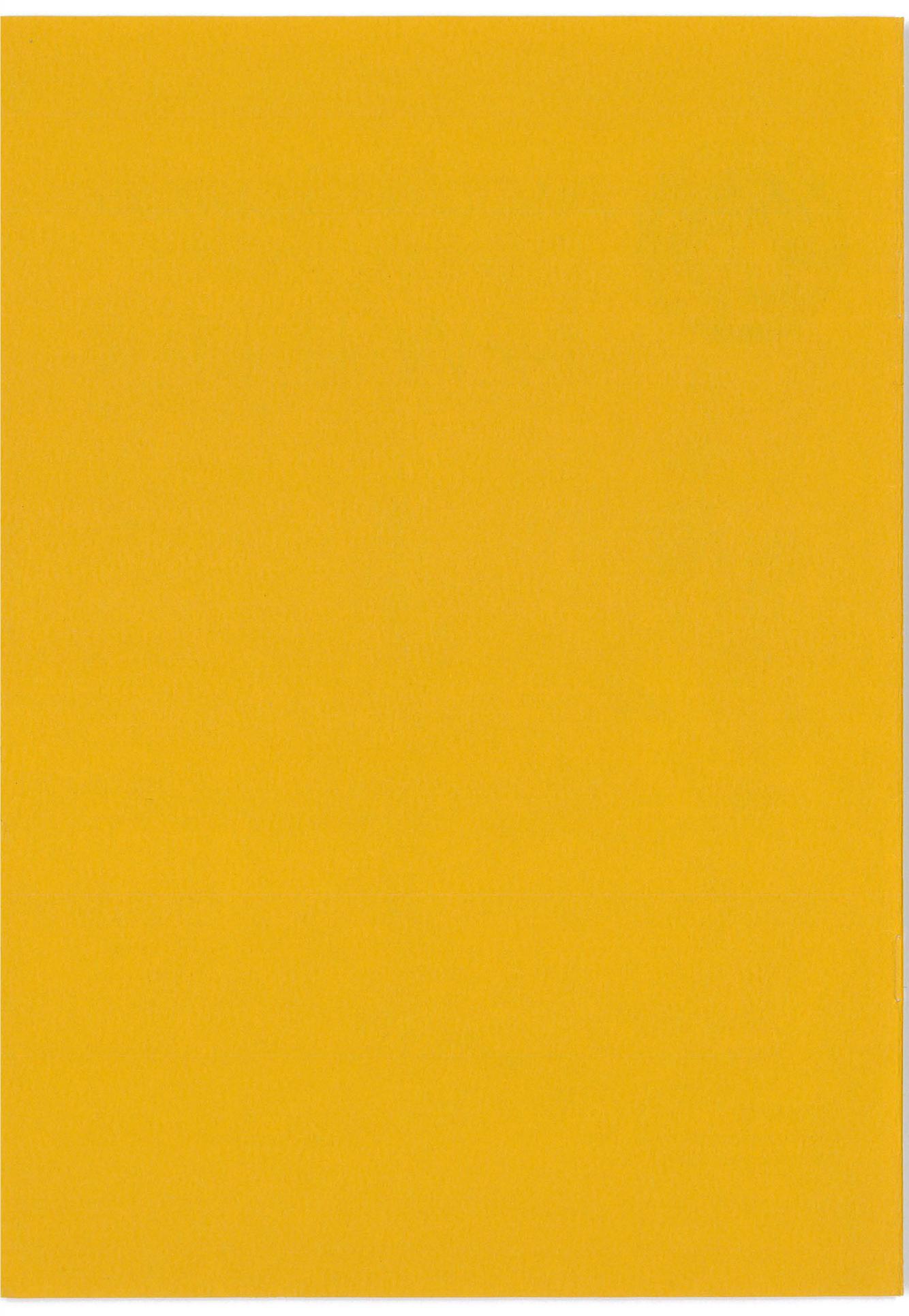
No. 31 JUNE 1982



Price: \$1.00

Registered by AUSTRALIA POST  
Publication No. QBH3340

*Triodia marginata* N.T. Burbidge



AUSTRALIAN SYSTEMATIC BOTANY SOCIETY  
CURRENT OFFICE BEARERS

President

Dr H.T. Clifford,  
Department of Botany,  
University of Queensland,  
St. Lucia. Qld. 4067

Vice President

Dr B. Barlow,  
Herbarium Australiense,  
C.S.I.R.O.,  
P.O. Box 1600,  
CANBERRA CITY. A.C.T. 2601

Secretary

Dr J. West,  
Herbarium Australiense,  
C.S.I.R.O.,  
P.O. Box 1600,  
CANBERRA CITY. A.C.T. 2601

Treasurer

Mr B. Conn,  
Department of Botany  
University of  
Adelaide,  
P.O. Box 498,  
ADELAIDE. S.A. 5000

Councillors

Mr L. Haegi,  
Botanic Gardens,  
North Terrace,  
ADELAIDE. S.A. 5000

Mr R. Henderson,  
Queensland Herbarium,  
Meiers Road,  
INDOOROOPILLY. Q. 4068

Conveners of Local Chapters

Adelaide	:	Mr David Symon	Hobart	:	Dr Tony Orchard
Alice Springs	:	Mr John Maconochie	Melbourne	:	Dr Dianne Simmons
Brisbane	:	Mr Laurie Jessup	Perth	:	Dr Kingsley Dixon
Canberra	:	Dr Helen Hewsen	Sydney	:	Dr Jocelyn Powell
Darwin	:	Dr Clyde Dunlop	Townsville	:	Dr Betsy Jackes

\*\*\*\*\*

Affiliated Society : Papua New Guinea Botanical Society

## The Society

The Australian Systematic Botany Society is an association of over 300 people with professional or amateur interest in Botany. The aim of the Society is to promote the study of plant systematics.

## Membership

Membership is open to all those interested in plant systematics and entitles the member to attend general and chapter meetings and to receive the Newsletter. Any person may become a member by forwarding the annual subscription to the Treasurer. Subscriptions become due on the 1st January.

## The Newsletter

The Newsletter appears quarterly and keeps members informed of Society events and news, and provides a vehicle for debate and discussion. In addition original articles, notes and letters (not exceeding ten pages in length) will be published. Contributions should be sent to the Editor at the address given below, preferably typed in duplicate and double-spaced. All items incorporated in the Newsletter will be duly acknowledged. Authors are alone responsible for the views expressed. The deadline for contributions is the last day of February, May, August and November.

## Notes

- (1) The deadline for the next Newsletter is 31st August.
- (2) Membership fees were due on 1st January. If you have not already paid - send a cheque for \$10 to the Treasurer (address given above).
- (3) Advertising space is available for products or services of interest to ASBS members. Current rates are \$30 per full page, \$15 per half page. Contact the Newsletter Editor for further information.

## Editor

Dr G.P. Guymer,  
Queensland Herbarium,  
Meiers Road,  
INDOOROPILLY. Q. 4068

## Editorial

In taking over the editorship of the Newsletter from Barry Conn, I would like to acknowledge the commendable job he has done editing the previous five issues. On behalf of members, I would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks to Barry.

Gordon Guymmer  
Editor

---

## President's Report

I am honoured to have been elected to the office of President of the Australian Systematic Botany Society. The title of President conjures up visions of power and responsibility for the holder but power within our Society is rightly limited by its constitution; responsibility for co-ordinating the Society's affairs is shared with an executive committee, which, though scattered, works actively for the well-being of the membership.

Over the past years much has been achieved including publication of the Flora of Central Australia and the co-sponsorship of a successful symposium on the Evolution of the Flora and Fauna of Arid Australia. In addition several of the local Chapters have pursued series of lectures on a variety of topics. Nonetheless there is no room for complacency for some Chapters have few members and some rarely meet.

In assessing this situation it seems to me that concerted action is required to check the malaise. A perusal of the Newsletter reveals that many of the Chapter meetings have involved papers dealing with a wide range of topics and that in most instances they are de facto "Botanical Societies". Accepting taxonomy to be an integrative discipline, it is quite proper that it draw upon whatever information is available. In these circumstances, it is difficult to define precisely the scope of systematics and it may be more realistic to legalize the present situation and to direct our attention towards the establishment of a Botanical Society of Australia. I would see any change as a metamorphosis for which transition the larval Australian Systematic Botany Society could be justly proud.

These remarks are addressed to the membership at large for their consideration. Meanwhile I shall continue to foster whenever possible the interests of the Society.

Trevor Clifford  
President

## Newsletter Cover

The Council, in their wisdom, left the responsibility of the front cover design of the Newsletter to the Editor. I have, in part, reciprocated this responsibility by asking the President what he would like to have illustrated on the front cover during his term. Triodia marginata was selected for a number of reasons, viz. the President has an interest in the classification of grasses, Triodia marginata was named by the distinguished Australian botanist Nancy Burbidge and Triodia is a predominantly Australian genus.

Gordon Guymer  
Editor

---

### FORMAT OF NEWSLETTERS 28, 29 AND 30

The Austral. Syst. Bot. Soc. Newsletter numbers 28, 29 and 30 were produced in Adelaide. I have had a few enquiries concerning the format of these issues. The format-size of the text is exactly the same as for all previous issues. However, these issues were printed on A4 size paper, since quarto is no longer available. If any member wishes to reduce these issues (except issue 30, see below), then they should be guillotined off the lower end and the left side (between edge and staples). However, please check each page first, as some pages, in some copies, were accidentally printed too long on the page. If this is so then these pages should be reduced separately.

Dislocated shoulder, bruised hand and hernia aside, issue 30 has been guillotined to the normal size.

I would like to sincerely thank Helen Bennett, Philip Short, Bill and Robyn Barker, and in particular, my wife Helen, for the many hours of collation, stapling and addressing. Technical assistance was generously provided by the State Herbarium of South Australia (AD) and the Botany Department, University of Adelaide.

Barry Conn  
Adelaide

# A New Home for NSW

## The Robert Brown Building

B.G. Briggs

Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney

At long last the National Herbarium of New South Wales has a new home. The file of papers on the proposed new building dates from 1936. R.H. (Bob) Anderson, Knowles Mair, John Beard and Lawrie Johnson, as Directors of the Gardens, in turn argued the case, pointing out to successive governments the severe overcrowding and risk to the collections in the old building. Eventually, Premier Neville Wran came and saw and was convinced. Even then there were delays and for twelve months no funds for Special Building Projects were granted and the hope of occupation for the time of the Congress became remote.

Throughout the planning and construction we have had excellent co-operation from the Government Architect's Branch of the New South Wales Public Works Department, which it is a pleasure to acknowledge. On our own staff, Don Blaxell and Surrey Jacobs, with Lawrie Johnson and myself, were particularly concerned with the details of planning.

Site preparation started in January 1980, but it soon became clear that completion by the Congress would only be possible if a most unsatisfactory standard was allowed, so our Congress visitors accepted with very good grace the crowded conditions of our old building.

At last, on 5th February, 1982, the keys were handed over and the move began. An excellent team of removalists from the New South Wales Government Stores Department has carried out most of the moving, working with our own staff rostered to see that items went in the right sequence to the right places. At the date of writing (22.2.1982) by far the greatest part of the herbarium collection and library are in the new building and the old building is looking very desolate indeed. It will come back to life when renovated to accommodate Living Collections and Communication (horticultural botany, education and extension) and the Administrative Services Divisions of the organisation, as well as the Director's office.

We have adopted commemorative naming of our buildings, with the new herbarium building named after Robert Brown. The others are named after former Directors. The old herbarium is the R.H. Anderson building and the former Director's residence, which accommodates the Gardens' Services Division (including landscaping section), is named after Allan Cunningham. Within the buildings, again, we are commemorating botanists who have been concerned with Australia and particularly with Sydney: Ernst Betche, J.D. Hooker, Joyce Vickery, and W.W. Watts for segments of the herbarium; George Cayley for the seminar room, and Daniel Solander for the library. J.H. Maiden is commemorated by the Lecture Theatre in the Anderson building.

Our collections are unmounted and, despite efforts to get staff for this, much will remain unmounted for many years. As a result, we find it necessary to retain a box system. After much consideration we decided to change to plastic boxes, since these give somewhat better protection in a situation relying on sprinklers for fire control. We have stayed with naphthalene as an insect repellent, but hope that the plastic will retain the vapour within the box much better than with the cardboard boxes. I might say that the new

boxes, despite a succession of prototypes, seem only moderately successful - technical problems with warping of the lids led us to accept a soft plastic lid, although the lower part is a rigid plastic. The soft lids have given us problems in stacking the boxes for any extended period.

The building occupies three floors, is air-conditioned with separate systems for the herbarium and offices, and provides about twice the specimen storage space of the old building (about 52 000 boxes in place of 22 500). Laboratory space and a Scanning Electron Microscope are included. Compactus storage is used only for part of the library and in store rooms.

The future will continue busy; moving the specimens is only the start of what is needed. We decided to change the sequence of angiosperm families and adopted the sequence of Dahlgren (1980), but with the legumes placed next to the Sapindales. This change was accomplished during the move. Another decision was to integrate Australian and non-Australian specimens. All specimens must be re-boxed, new-style labels prepared, boxes divided to relieve over-crowding, and the "overflow herbarium" incorporated. The last represents accumulated accessions from recent years when there was no space to put them in their proper places. Also to be incorporated is a large collection recently transferred from the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney, which has closed down its botanical and chemical sections and substantial collections donated by E.J. McBarron.

In recent years parts of the herbarium had to be located elsewhere, because of the lack of space. By about 2nd March, those from "Cottage 4" in the Gardens, as well as the Ecology section from temporary accommodation in a city office, will have moved into this building. Naturally there are some things we would do rather differently if we had our time over again - one does learn by experience - but I think that all at New South Wales are very well pleased to have a new home.

Reference:

Dahlgren, R. (1980). A revised system of classification of the angiosperms. J. Linn. Soc. Bot. 80: 91-124.

---

# A Plea for a Sense of Proportion

A.E. Orchard

Tasmanian Herbarium, Hobart

I was glad to see in the November issue of the Newsletter 29: 8 (1981), "The Herbarium in Botanical Research" the attempt to instill some humour into what would otherwise have been a rather serious-minded publication. At least, I hope it was meant to be humorous, because if the report of the meeting was intended to be a serious discussion of what the botanical community expects of herbaria, then the future outlook for taxonomy is grim indeed. Discussions of whether herbaria are or should be following 'modern (developmental/experimental) approaches to taxonomy' or whether their data storage/retrieval systems are adequate for assessments of environmental impact statements seem to me to be ludicrously inappropriate when at least one herbarium in the deep south is being slowly strangled by a combination of neglect from financing bodies and the result of overworked staff daily falling further behind in the basic processing of incoming material. When time for taxonomic research is a distant memory of past luxury, talk of experimental and developmental studies and remote sensing seems irrelevant. In the belief that the above problem may not be confined to a single institution, I would like to briefly consider what I see as some of the causes of this malaise, and what we might do about it.

Australian herbaria had a brief golden period in the late 1960's and early 1970's when many saw a rapid increase in their staff and some even acquired new and adequate housing. At that time their role was simple and well-defined: to build and preserve representative collections of the plants of their region, and to carry out basic taxonomic research on them. In the last 10-15 years things have become more complicated. Direct funding has become static, or even reduced in real terms and staff ceilings have been rigidly enforced. Those herbaria which missed the boom for one reason or another are left with inadequate staff numbers and poor, often overcrowded buildings.

In the same period there has been a large increase in the demands placed on the herbaria by the botanical community. They are now expected in many cases to provide information on endangered plants, to provide forensic evidence in court cases, to participate in conservation studies, to prepare and evaluate environmental impact studies, to provide identifications for elaborate ecological surveys, to be involved in vegetation mapping and to contribute to various co-operative projects such as the Flora of Central Australia. In the last year or so they have also begun to devote increasing resources to the writing of the Flora of Australia and to associated tasks like servicing the vastly increased number of loans that this project has generated. These are all very useful and worthwhile activities, but by and large they have been undertaken with little or no increase in the available staff resources. While the workload (largely 'service' work) in the last 10 years has probably increased 2 or 3 fold, the staff numbers available to do it has certainly not followed suit.

This has had one of two consequences. Either research is neglected, and more and more professional time is put into technical and service activities, to build and maintain the collections for what are hoped to be

better times ahead, or else research is given priority, backlogs build up, collections deteriorate and fieldwork is left undone. Either way, taxonomy suffers. I believe that it is time for herbaria to return to doing that for which they were originally established, and which they are best equipped to do: basic taxonomic ('alpha', 'classical', call it what you will) research, and this includes the building and curation of the necessary collections.

When the Australian flora is so poorly known that current studies turn up as many as 50% new taxa, there is obviously enough work available to keep herbaria busy for many years to come. The associated and more esoteric studies can be left to Universities and other institutions where there is time, facilities and sufficient freedom from interruption to undertake them.

However, just reducing the range of activities is not enough. There are other positive steps needed.

1. Every opportunity must be taken to educate the disbursers of funds in the importance of herbaria as archives of botanical knowledge and as the cataloguers of our botanical resources. Only in this way will sufficient funds become available to keep the herbaria viable.

2. Controllers of funding bodies must be convinced that the building and maintenance of collections is an integral part of basic taxonomic research, and both must be carried out in any institution. Provision of money for technical/curatorial work will stimulate research output by freeing professional botanists for research.

3. Trivial and time-wasting requests to herbaria should be avoided. These come in two main forms of which the following are typical.

(i) "Dear Sir, For 2(4-6-10) years I have been studying genus X. I am now ready to publish my thesis/book and wonder if you can give me a list of all the specimens in your herbarium, with localities and ecological data".

Usually followed shortly afterwards by another letter stating "The time for publication of my thesis/book is fast approaching/just past. Why haven't you replied?" Such requests show a touching faith in the ability of a herbarium to locate all material under its control, and in the accuracy of its routine determinations.

(ii) Requests for loans for trivial reasons. We recently had a request for a loan of all material of a particular genus to sort out a problem noticed while collecting in Tasmania. Preparation of the loan, including remounting, relabelling etc. took 6 man/days of work. The loan was returned virtually untouched after a fortnight with the comment (paraphrased) "The problem is more complicated than I thought; I am no longer interested".

4. Botanists (professional and amateur) who benefit from using the facilities of herbaria might consider repaying the institution from time to time by volunteering their own or their friends' time in helping to reduce the almost ubiquitous backlog of routine determinations and mounting that most institutions accumulate. I do not know how many attended the discussion which prompted this article; suppose it was 20, and they talked for 2 hours. That amounts to 40 man/hours, enough time say, to mount 500-750 specimens, or determine 200, or file 400. The latter activities, to my mind, would have had a more far-reaching and beneficial impact on taxonomic botany than the outcome of the discussion.

# A Comment on Dr Orchard's Article

B.J. Conn

Department of Botany, University of Adelaide, S.A.

Of course, I was stirring, well, ever so slightly! In my brief summary of the July meeting of the Adelaide chapter on the role of the Herbarium (Austral. Syst. Bot. Soc. Newsletter 29:8(1981)). I presented the non-herbarium point of view. After all, it is unnecessary to preach to the converted. It is important to point out that this meeting was organised so that the non-herbarium point of view could be expressed. There was no formal attempt, in the meeting, to evaluate these views. I had followed a similar approach in my article, by simply stating the 'facts' and views, without making any value judgements.

Apart from Tony's opening remarks (and some people find my sense of humour a little strange, at the best of times!), I agree with most of his comments. However, while fully appreciating the problems faced at HO, I find it hard to believe that the future of taxonomy lies solely inside an herbarium box. It tends to remind me of the Ostrich and the head-in-the-sand trick! I fully agree that curation must be done, and must be done well. I can also appreciate the frustration of having insufficient staff to carry out this work, but, I do not believe that is where the future of taxonomy lies. It is merely routine housekeeping. It is analogous to washing glassware for the physiologist. It also has to be done, and it has to be done well, but it is not the part of his work, which makes a physiologist great. Therefore, I would always separate taxonomy from curation of collections, even though both influence each other.

Contrary to Tony's view, I believe that most herbaria do have 'time, facilities and sufficient freedom from interruption' to carry out much of the research which is presently done in Australian Universities and other institutions. The point is, Australian herbaria do not see such activities as part of their priorities. I am not trying to say that Herbaria are wrong to hold such views, but rather, to state the fact that they tend to see their duties in the traditional sense. In contrast, a number of the large University-based herbaria of Europe (in particular) and America have achieved a successful blend of traditional and modern taxonomic endeavours. Australian herbaria can continue with their traditional activities but surely greater contact with non-herbarium based taxonomists can only benefit both groups. I should emphasise, in defence of those who attended the Adelaide meeting, that the meeting did not dispute the need for traditional taxonomic activities. After all, approximately half of those in attendance had worked or do work in herbaria.

I am fully sympathetic to the comments made under points 1-3. The first part of point 4 seems to be merely 'first-aid'. However, considering the present state of our economy, including the apparent attitudes of politicians and others, maybe it is all that we can dare hope for. The scenario offered in the last paragraph would no doubt bring a smile to the face of every Curator in Australia.

# The Genus Myrtus or Austromyrtus in Australia ?

N. Byrnes

Queensland Herbarium, Brisbane

The genus Myrtus was created by Linnaeus in Species Plantarum in 1753 based on Myrtus communis.

Nieden zu in Engler and Prantl, Die Naturlichen Pflanzenfamilien 3(7): 66-7 (1893) proposed subdivisions of the genus and following is a free translation of his diagnosis.

Subgenus Calomyrtus Ndz. Flowers single or in racemose inflorescences, calyx and corolla mostly 5-merous. Placenta typical.

Sect. 1 Eumyrtus Ndz. Sepals free or very shortly united at the base, longer than wide and usually acute or acuminate (M. communis was included in this section).

Sect. 2 Austromyrtus Ndz. Sepals fused at the base into a moderately broad border, broader than long with obtuse apices (the only 4 Australian species see by Nieden zu were placed here).

Subgenus Pseudocaryophyllus Berg. Flowers in umbels or umbel-like panicles or corymbs; calyx and corolla usually 4-merous; placenta shield-shaped.

Burret in Notizb. Bot. Gart. Mus. Berlin Dahlem 15: 500 (1941) raised Austromyrtus to generic level stating that it differed from Myrtus by having Eugenia-type placentation and from Eugenia by having Myrtus-type seeds.

Nieden zu distinguished the two sections on differences in the sepals and grouped them together with the same type of placentas but Burret ignored this.

Examination of Australian material has revealed that there are strictly four types of placentation and most Australian material cannot be separated from M. communis or Eugenia uniflora satisfactorily on the basis of placentation. Therefore, Burret's argument for raising Austromyrtus to generic rank is refuted.

Nieden zu only saw four Australian species and based his classification on these, although he had to make an exception of M. fragrantissima which is 4-merous yet placed in his subg. Calomyrtus which was mainly 5-merous. Had he had a wider range of species, including M. lasioclada with its apically attached lamelliform placentas or M. pubiflora with its long acuminate calyx lobes, his classification would have been different.

Because the Australian species now all grouped under Austromyrtus are not a single coherent group and all do not even agree in their characters or combination of characters with the subdivisions of the genus as prescribed by Nieden zu they would be better left under Myrtus sens. lat. An exception is Myrtus metrosideros C.T. White which because of its staminal structure should be placed in Uromyrtus. Undoubtedly subdivisions of the genus Myrtus can be made but there is little to be gained from the proliferation of generic names.

It is obvious that the transfer of at least some of the species of Myrtus to Austromyrtus was done purely on geographic grounds but the Australian material shows that distribution and taxonomic characters are not necessarily correlated.

---

## Australian Sapotaceae

### Amorphospermum & Niemeyera

G.P. Guymer

Queensland Herbarium, Brisbane

#### AMORPHOSPERMUM F. Muell.

This genus was described by Mueller, Fragm. 7: 112 (1870), based on A. antilogum F. Muell. Vink (1958) placed Amorphospermum in synonymy under Chrysophyllum on the basis of floral characters, giving little credence to the marked fruit and seed differences between the two. Aubréville (1965) and Baehni (1965) reinstated Amorphospermum and clearly distinguished this genus from Chrysophyllum (Baehni (1965) placed these two genera in separate subfamilies). Although Aubréville's (1965) generic classification has been followed his description (in the same paper) of A. whitei has been overlooked.

#### A. whitei Aubr. (Fig. 1C)

Mueller, Fragm. 7: 114 (1870), placed this as yet unrecognised taxon under Niemeyera prunifera (F. Muell.) F. Muell. (Chrysophyllum prunifera F. Muell.) when he cited the collections of C. Moore (Bellinger R.) and Wilcox (Clarence R.).

The type of Niemeyera prunifera is a Dallachy specimen from Rockingham Bay (N. Qld.) and material at BRI indicates that this species extends only as far south as Mackay.

A. whitei has been recorded from Tallebudgera Creek (S.E. Qld.) to Port Macquarie (N.S.W.). A. antilogum F. Muell. is the only other species of this genus recorded for Australia.

#### NIEMEYERA F. Muell.

Vink (1958) in his revision of Chrysophyllum (including Amorphospermum and Niemeyera) circumscribed C. pruniferum F. Muell. (now Niemeyera prunifera) on the basis of the type collection and material of the then undescribed Amorphospermum whitei. He understandably found great difficulty in accounting for the variation within his concept of C. pruniferum. His confusion was further compounded when he included numerous specimens of C. pruniferum under C. chartaceum (Bailey) Vink (now Niemeyera chartacea (Bailey) C. White). His remark that 'it is very difficult to delimit C. pruniferum and C. chartaceum' was indeed an understatement and his conclusion that they were conspecific was undoubtedly true (in part) for the material he grouped under these names.

Examination of the types of N. chartacea and N. prunifera, and material at BRI, clearly show that the two species can be readily distinguished on leaf and fruit characters (Fig. 1A and B).

1. Tertiary venation reticulate; translucent well-spaced 'dots' present in leaves (visible with a lens); fruits 20-25 mm long, hilum elliptic, 14-16 x 5.7 mm . . . . . N. chartacea
- \*1. Tertiary venation  $\pm$  parallel between lateral veins; translucent dots absent in leaves; fruits 24-30 mm diam., hilum ovate 16-18 x 11-13 mm . . . . . N. prunifera

Niemeyera chartacea (Bailey) C. White

N. chartacea has been recorded from Mackay to Brunswick Heads (N.E. N.S.W.).

Niemeyera prunifera

This species should be deleted from the New South Wales flora and replaced by Amorpospermum whitei.

Aubreville's (1967) statement that N. prunifera = N. chartacea is refuted.

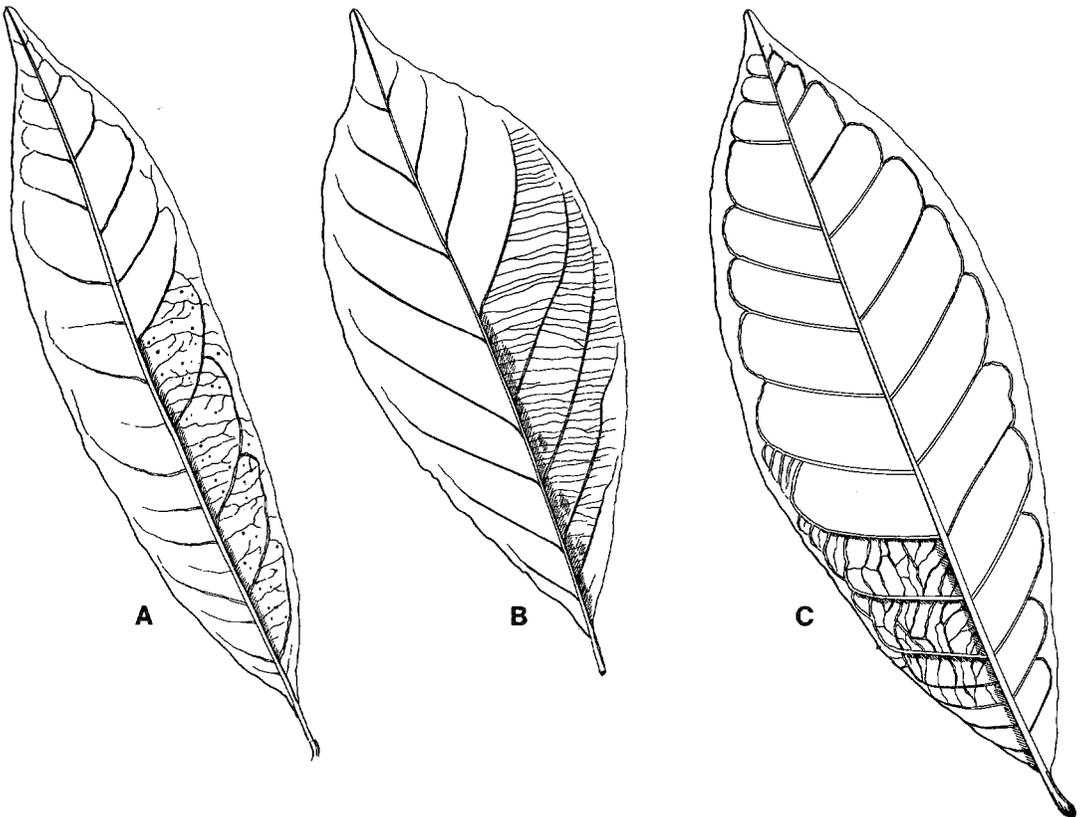


Fig. 1. Leaves of A, Niemeyera chartacea (Bailey) C. White (from lectotype, J.F. Bailey s.n.); B, N. prunifera (F. Muell.) F. Muell. (from Kajewski 1213); C, Amorpospermum whitei Aubr. (from Webb & C.T. White 2147).

## REFERENCES

- Aubreville, A. (1965). Notes sur des Sapotacées Australiennes. Adansonia 5 (1): 21-26.
- Aubreville, A. (1967). Flore de la Nouvelle-Calédonie et Dépendances. Sapotacees. Muséum National D'Histoire Naturelle (Paris).
- Baehni, C. (1965). Mémoire sur les Sapotacees III. Inventaire des genres. Boissiera 11: 1-262.
- Vink, W. (1958). Sapotaceae of the Malaysian area in a wider sense VIII. Chrysophyllum L. Blumea 9(1): 21-74.

---

## Notes from May Council Meeting

Canberra - 11th May, 1982

Present: B. Barlow, T. Clifford, L. Haegi, R. Henderson, J. West.

Apologies: B. Conn

Minutes of August 1981 Council Meeting: Accepted and signed.

Publication of 'Evolution of Flora and Fauna of Arid Australia': The publication of papers from this symposium is well advanced with the proposed publication date being the end of August. Since the Society contributed \$1,000 towards publication costs its name will be included on the title page as a 'co-publisher'.

Future Meetings: Brisbane May 1982 - The previous plans to hold a small symposium in Brisbane this May did not eventuate although a local chapter meeting will be held instead.

Perth May 1982 - Neville Marchant has offered to organise a symposium of two morning sessions together with the ANZAAS meeting for the Society. There will also be an official Society dinner with a Nancy Burbidge Memorial Lecture following. It is planned to hold the General Meeting during the ANZAAS programme.

Bicentennial History of Science: Alex George has agreed to represent the Society at the Academy workshop on 24th and 25th August to consider topics for the production of the Bicentennial History of Science.

Next Council and General Meetings: In conjunction with ANZAAS in Perth May 1983.

Judy West  
Secretary

# The Plurality of Family Names

W.R. Barker

State Herbarium of S.A., Adelaide

It is a source of some despair to come across the grammatically incorrect treatment of the Latin family name as singular when standing alone, i.e. not qualified by its rank in apposition. Two works in which this occurs are Davis and Heywood (1963) and Heywood (1978). It is inconsistent then that in the former work (see e.g. pp. 60, 72, 175, 186, 239, 248) Latin names of, for example, orders and tribes are correctly dealt with as plural! Also illogical in these works is the correct usage of constructions such as 'Several Compositae are ...', which can only apply if the family name is plural.

Dealing with family names first, Voss and Greuter (1981), the nomenclatural rapporteurs for the last Congress, indicate that the Code (ICBN, Art 18.1) is quite clear on the plurality of family names: 'The name of a family is a plural adjective used as a substantive' (i.e. a noun). A number of examples treating family names as plural are found in the Code (e.g. under Art. 18.5 and Art 19.3).

Stearn (1966) and Jeffrey (1977) support this unequivocally. Stearn explains that the family name and most other names above species, excluding the genus name, are plural adjectives which originally followed on from and agreed with plantae (plants). Their endings, e.g. -ales, -eae, -inae, -aceae, -oideae, -(phyc)eae and -(phyc)idae, are Latin adjectival suffixes indicating either a resemblance or association with the genus whose name forms the stem. Plantae subsequently became redundant. Thus, 'The Scrophulariaceae form a diverse family' was originally in translated Latin 'The plants like Scrophularia form a diverse family' or 'Scrophulariaceous plants form a diverse family'. One can find parallels in English. 'The Theaceae are ...' equates with 'The Smiths are ...'. It is clear that the use of the family name in the singular is as incorrect in English as has been that of such Latin-derived words as 'data', although this example, through persistent usage arising out of ignorance, has finally made it into the 'Concise Oxford Dictionary' (6th edn.) as acceptable in the singular. When the rank precedes the family name, as in 'the family Theaceae', this is usually treated in botany as singular, but, as family is a collective noun, plural would even be in order here. Thus, both forms of 'The Smith family is/are ...' would be correct.

In a similar way names of classes, subclasses, orders, suborders, subfamilies, tribes and subtribes are plural. So too are those names denoting subgenera, sections, subsections, series and subseries, which take the form of plural adjectives. However, in infrageneric categories (ICBN, Art 21.2) names may alternatively take the form of a genus, i.e. a singular noun or its equivalent, and here (alone) our system of nomenclature produces possible confusion in English. Hence, Sect. Trifidae of Euphrasia is a plural adjective - one would say 'The Trifidae are ...', while Sect. Eremophyton or Subg. Eremophyton of Euphorbia are singular nouns - one would say 'Eremophyton is ...'. Fortunately two factors relieve the problem. The Code recommends against combining both forms under the one genus (ICBN, Rec. 21B.2), but this of course is not possible to avoid on union of genera with infrageneric names in different forms. Nor can the name of the section or subgenus (which includes the type of the genus) be anything other than singular. In this latter case, however, to avert confusion with the generic name one would

rarely want to use the name without its rank name. I am not aware of such problems at these infrageneric ranks, and possibly in practice there is little trouble because such names are so little known that they also are dealt with in combination with their rank name (i.e. as 'Sect. Racemosae', not 'Racemosae' alone).

It is the family name and to a lesser extent those of order, subfamily and tribe which are most frequently used in the literature on their own. There is no reason why all of us cannot use these names in their correct plural sense in both the languages of English and botanical Latin.

#### REFERENCES

- Davis, P.H. and V.H. Heywood (1963). Principles of Angiosperm Taxonomy. Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, London.
- Heywood, V.H. (ed.) (1978). Flowering Plants of the World. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Jeffrey, C. (1977). Biological Nomenclature, ed. 2. Edward Arnold, London, p. 8.
- Stearn, W.T. (1966). Botanical Latin. Nelson, London, pp. 102-3.
- Voss, E.G. and W.G. Greuter (1981). Synopsis of Proposals on Botanical Nomenclature, Sydney 1981. Taxon 30: 109.

---

#### CONSERVATION AND THE SOCIETY

The majority of Society members are actively involved in conservation issues or are sympathetic to their objectives. Accordingly, the Council felt that an urgent call from the Australian Conservation Council, in January 1982, to support the "Save the Franklin" campaign should not go unanswered. After a series of telephone calls amongst the Council it was decided to donate \$50.00 of the Society's funds to this cause.

The Franklin is not an isolated issue and similar requests are bound to be made in the future. It is therefore important that Council receive advice from the Membership as to what action is to be taken in regard to future requests for donations. Correspondence on the subject should be addressed to the Secretary.

Trevor Clifford  
President

# Notes on Sporobolus in Australia

B.K. Simon

Queensland Herbarium, Brisbane.

During the course of compiling a key to the grasses of Australia, problems were encountered recently in constructing a key to Sporobolus. These difficulties have been previously experienced particularly with regard to species belonging to the Sporobolus indicus complex (Clayton, 1965, 1974; Jovet & Guédès, 1968). The problems are mainly due to the probable recent speciation of the genus especially of those species around S. indicus. Indeed the comments of Clayton (1974, p. 353), in relation to Sporobolus in general, are worth repeating here - "A large genus not divisible into well-defined sections, although clusters of closely allied species are apparent. Within the clusters, and to a lesser extent between them, the boundaries between species are seldom clear-cut, and the occurrence of intermediates appears to be the rule rather than the exception".

In my key to Queensland species of Sporobolus (Simon, 1980) I maintained Clayton's position with respect to three very closely allied species - S. indicus (L.) R.Br., S. africanus (Poir.) Robyns & Tournay, and S. fertilis (Steudel) W.D. Clayton - by treating the taxa at the rank of species. However, the only characters used to separate them - the size of the grain with respect to the length of the lemma and palea and the comparative size of the spikelets - are not distinct enough to warrant species rank in my opinion. Grain size can only be examined in a mature spikelet and in practice it is not found to be distinctly shorter than or as long as the enclosing bracts as indicated. Spikelet size appears to show a continuum through the sizes given. For these reasons, I consider the use of an infra-specific rank for these three taxa to more appropriate. The varietal rank has already been used (Jovet & Guédès, 1973) and I propose following these authors in my key to Australian grasses.

As an example as to how confusing has been the application of names to the Sporobolus indicus complex it is noted that the same botanical plate has been used to illustrate three different species of this complex in different publications. In Hutchinson & Dalziel (1936, fig. 367) the name used is S. pyramidalis Beauv.; in Bor (1960, fig. 76) the name used is S. indicus auctt. non (Linn.) R.Br., corrected to S. fertilis (Steud.) W.D. Clayton in Bor (1973); and in Hepper (1972, fig. 435) the name used is S. africanus (Poir.) Robyns & Tournay. Because of the pointed glumes in the illustration S. pyramidalis can be eliminated for consideration as a candidate for the correct name, but as there is no scale and the grain is not illustrated it is difficult to apply either of the remaining names with certainty.

A closer examination of a number of BRI specimens until now placed with S. diander (Retz.) Beauv. showed them to have been wrongly identified and they have been re-assigned to S. jacquemontii Kunth. on the basis of the possession of short upper glumes. This species, described from tropical America, is widespread in Queensland in relatively undisturbed areas and the nature of its exotic status in Australia seems open to question. I am not following the lead of Jovet and Guédès in designating this species a variety of S. pyramidalis Beauv. as there appears a considerable size difference and some difference in the spikelets between the two. Likewise the placing of S. diander (Retz.) Beauv. as a variety of S. indicus by Jovet and Guédès has not been followed as it is felt the more open spreading inflorescence is adequate to keep it apart at species rank. Furthermore the possession of two stamens as opposed to three in the S. indicus complex is a further reason



13. Culm 50-70 cm tall; inflorescence less than 25 cm long (Q) ..... \*S. jacquemontii Kunth  
 Culm 90-160 cm tall; inflorescence up to 40 cm long (Q, NSW) ..... \*S. pyramidalis Beauv.
14. Inflorescence more or less spicate ..... 15  
 Inflorescence more or less open or the spikelets arranged in spike-like clusters ..... 17
15. Grain almost as long as the lemma and palea (Q) ..... \*S. indicus (L.) R.Br. var. indicus  
 Grain somewhat shorter than the lemma and palea ..... 16
16. Spikelets 2.1-2.5 mm long (WA, SA, Q, NSW) ..... \*S. indicus var. africanus (Poir) Jovet & Guédès  
 Spikelets 1.6-2 mm long (Q) ..... S. indicus var. fertilis (Steudel) Jovet & Guédès
17. Inflorescence more or less open with the spikelets spaced loosely and fairly evenly along the branches ..... 18  
 Inflorescence with the spikelets in spike-like clusters on the branches ..... 19
18. Inflorescence branches bearing spikelets to the base; stamens 2 (Q, NSW) ..... S. diander (Retz.) Beauv.  
 Inflorescence branches naked for some distance at the base; stamens 3 (Q) ..... S. laxus B.K. Simon ms.
19. Inflorescence branches short stiff and appressed to the axis (Q, NSW, V) ..... S. creber De Nardi  
 Inflorescence branches longer and diverging from axis ..... 20
20. Leaf blades involute; leaf sheaths not distinctly fibrous at the base of the plant (WA, SA, Q, NSW) .... S. elongatus R.Br.  
 Leaf blades flattened; leaf sheaths distinctly fibrous at the base of the plant (NT) ..... S. sp. Latz 2483

REFERENCES

Bor, N.L. (1960). The grasses of Burma, Ceylon, India and Pakistan. London: Pergamon Press.

Bor, N.L. (1973). The grasses of Burma, Ceylon, India and Pakistan, reprint.

Clayton, W.D. (1965). Studies in the Gramineae: VI. The Sporobolus indicus complex. Kew Bulletin 19: 287-293.

Clayton, W.D. (1974). Sporobolus in Polhill, R.M. (ed.), Flora of Tropical East Africa, Gramineae 2: 353-388.

Hepper, F.N. (ed.) (1972). Flora of West Tropical Africa, Second Edition Vol. 3(2) London: Crown Agents for Oversea Governments.

- Hutchinson, J. & Dalziel, J.M. (1936). Flora of West Tropical Africa Vol. 2(2): Monocotyledones. London: Crown Agents for the Colonies.
- Jovet, P. & Guédès, M. (1968). Le Sporobolus indicus (L.) R.Br. var. fertilis (Steud.) Jov. & Guéd. naturalisé en France, avec une revue du groupe du Sporobolus indicus dans le monde. Bull. Cent. Etud. Rech. Sci., Biarritz 7: 47-75.
- Jovet, P. & Guédès, M. (1973). Validation of names in Sporobolus. Taxon 22: 163.
- Simon, B.K. (1980). A Key to Queensland grasses. Botany Branch, Queensland Department of Primary Industries, Technical Bulletin 4.
- Simon, B.K. (1982, in press). New species of Gramineae from south-eastern Queensland. Austrobaileya 1(5).

## Report on The Flora of Australia

Since the last report, two volumes of the Flora of Australia have been completed. Volume 29 (Solanaceae) was completed at the end of December but publication was delayed owing to lack of funds. Work on Volume 8 proceeded steadily and was tailored to fit in with the Bureau's programmes in the Fauna and Biotaxonomic Information Sections, aiming for completion at the end of June. At the meeting of the ABRS Advisory Committee on 16-18 March, the then Minister for Home Affairs and Environment, the Honourable Ian Wilson, announced that funds had been obtained in the additional estimates to publish both volumes 8 and 29. Volume 29 was submitted to AGPS and work on Volume 8 accelerated. The co-operation of the Fauna and Biotax Sections of the Bureau in this respect is gratefully acknowledged. Outside the Bureau some 40 people were directly involved in the work - writing, refereeing providing information, etc. It is extremely gratifying to report that these efforts were successful. The Volume, totalling 432 pages, was completed and delivered to AGPS on 21 May. It is expected that Volume 29 will be published in late June and Volume 8 about a month later.

The Flora Section has held two workshops, one in February on Orchidaceae and one in May on Proteaceae. Both were successful in planning these families for the Flora.

### Contributors to the Flora

Preparation of the following groups has been arranged. Several of these were omitted from the list in the November Newsletter.

- |                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Vol. 4 Cactaceae            | I.R. Telford (CBG) due 15 November 1982  |
| Vol. 8 <u>Aldrovanda</u>    | H.I. Aston (MEL) completed   |
| Bixaceae                    | A.S. George (BFF) completed  |
| Cistaceae                   | A.S. George (BFF) completed  |
| Tamaricaceae                | B.G. Briggs (NSW) completed  |
| Vol.16 Proteaceae<br>and 17 | D. Foreman (NE), B. Hyland (QRS), L.A.S. Johnson (NSW),<br>D. McGillivray (NSW), P. Weston (SYD), A.S. George<br>(BFF). Various dates up to June 1987. |

- Vol. 30 Halgania K.F. Kenneally (PERTH) 31 Dec. 1985
- Vol. 35 Goodeniaceae R.C. Carolin (SYD)  
 Brunoniaceae R.C. Carolin both 31 Dec. 1985
- Vol. 45. Haemodorum T.D. Macfarlane (PERTH) 31 Dec. 1983  
 Hydatellaceae D. Cooke (MEL) completed
- Vol. 46 Iridaceae D. Cooke (MEL supervised by J. Jessop, AD) 31 Dec. 1982  
Xanthorrhoea A. Lee, D. Bedford (NSW) 1983
- Vol. 47 Orchidaceae D.F. Blaxell (NSW), M.C. Clements (CBG), D.L. Jones (QLD),  
 P.S. Lavarack (QLD National Parks and Wildlife Service),  
 J.Z. Weber (AD), B. Wallace (NSW), A.S. George (BFF).  
 Various dates up to June 1988.

A.S. George  
Acting Assistant Director, Flora  
 26 May, 1982

## Chapter News

### BRISBANE

At the May meeting of the Brisbane Chapter, Trevor Clifford gave a brief report on the recent Council meeting held in Canberra.

This was followed by an enlightening talk by Norm Byrnes on 'Melaleuca - a neglected genus'. Norm's recent work in Melaleuca has further highlighted the problems of generic limits in Myrtaceae. The proliferation of binomials in Melaleuca (c. 370 for approx. 180 species) has resulted from the extensive cultivation of the genus in other parts of the world from as early as 1778, and the marked clinal variation within certain species.

Les Pedley (BRI) has recently returned from a Tephrosia collecting trip to north Queensland.

L.W. Jessup  
Convenor

### OTHER CHAPTERS

No copy has been received from the other Chapters. Conveners can I have your news please!

Editor

---

## Personal News

### NEW APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Laurie Haegi, formerly of the New South Wales National Herbarium, has recently joined the staff of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens. He is sadly missed at NSW.

Mr. Ben Wallace has recently been appointed as a Horticultural Botanist at the Sydney Botanic Gardens.

---

# Letters to the Editor

## FLORA OF AUSTRALIA PROJECT - SOME COMMENTS IN RELATION TO THE TREATMENT OF VIOLA

After much preparation and spoken as well as written words on the subject, the Flora of Australia is now being produced at what will be great eventual cost to intending subscribers.

I do not propose to enter into a discussion as to the merits of the Flora, but wish to raise some points of concern about the treatment of taxa and of the work of taxonomists. I have unfortunately just been party to one of my early fears about the Flora project. I feared that in apparent haste to see the project completed the work of taxonomic botanists in this country, and overseas, may be usurped in order that publication deadlines might be reached.

I have been interested in the taxonomy of Viola in this country since 1974. Due to circumstances not entirely beyond my control I was forced to abandon temporarily this project in favour of a more profitable one to complete a doctoral thesis. This done, I returned to working with Viola, in particular the V. hederacea - V. sieberiana complex.

In August 1980 I submitted to Brunonia a paper describing new taxa in V. hederacea and V. sieberiana. Anticipating publication I had annotated herbarium sheets in AD, NSW, BRI and HO accordingly. The manuscript was subsequently rejected by Brunonia, chiefly on the basis that not enough specimens were cited for one distinct forma (there are only 2 in existence), that a distinct subspecies from one geographical locality was not acceptable (it is only known from Mt. Buffalo in Victoria), and that the publication of new taxa should have come after publication of other studies (which is helpful when one wishes to use the new taxa names!).

In October 1981 I was asked by Mr. George to write the section on Viola for the Flora of Australia, being given very little time to complete it. Unfortunately, I was unable to complete this task before leaving for summer field work on subantarctic Macquarie Island, from where I returned in February, 1982.

On my return, I ascertained that another worker had written the Viola treatment. I am now in the privileged position of viewing the manuscript prior to publication.

Two of the taxa I had recognised as distinct and described in my manuscript have been described anew, albeit at different rank and with different names. One other taxon newly described is indistinguishable in manuscript from a taxon recognised as new by me, albeit from a different geographical region.

I am quite familiar with the Viola hederacea - V. sieberiana complex in Australia. I cannot agree with the interpretation given in the Flora of Australia, but that is my right in as much that others may well agree with it.

Much of the variation shown by the complex, including some distinct taxa, is not accounted for. To place *V. sieberiana* in *V. hederacea* is, I believe, a retrograde step and is not supported by morphological or cytological grounds. If I can find an Australian publisher I will correct this treatment accordingly.

Some important questions are raised by my experience. These may be outlined as follows.

If, as I have been told by Mr. George, herbarium sheet annotations become public property once placed on a sheet, what do revisionists do? Do we retain the sheets long after deadlines for their return in order to safeguard our work while we seek a publisher? Are we entitled to some form of interpretative protection pending publication?

If the Flora Committee wish to comply with, I believe, ridiculous deadlines, what safeguards are there for researchers involved in complex revisionary studies (as is the case with *Viola*) in order that their work may be acknowledged? (At no time was I offered joint authorship of the *Viola* project when I was unable to complete the revision by the end of November 1981).

As the Flora is likely to become the 'gospel' on the Australian Flora, how can the information contained therein be corrected if specialists do not agree with the treatments given by workers co-opted to complete sections?

As we have had to wait so long now for a new Flora, why the panic to race it through to completion?

Having been the unfortunate (and first?) victim in seeing my research studies usurped I would like to warn other workers to beware of similar treatments. Looking to the future, to the volumes on lichens, with so few lichenologists in this country (lower plant taxonomists are virtually not supported in Herbaria), I wonder how overseas specialists will react to the compliance with deadlines and the probable inclusions of incomplete treatments in the default of deadline requirements.

R.D. Seppelt

---

#### RESPONSE TO DR SEPELT'S COMMENTS

We confirm much of the sequence indicated by Dr. Seppelt but would offer the following comments:

Because Dr. Seppelt was known to have studied the *Viola hederacea*-*V. sieberiana* complex, he was invited in early October, 1981, to prepare a treatment of that complex for Volume 8 of the Flora of Australia. Dr. Seppelt advised that he was to leave for Macquarie Island at the end of October, but agreed to prepare the Flora manuscript before leaving. The remainder of *Viola* was to be written by Mr. L. Adams, Herbarium Australiense who had undertaken studies in the genus for some fifteen years. At the time these arrangements were made, the final deadline for receipt of manuscript for Volume 8 was 31 January, 1982, a date earlier than Dr. Seppelt's planned return from Macquarie Island.

No further communication was received from Dr. Seppelt before he left Hobart. A message was passed to him on Macquarie Island regarding the manuscript. He replied that none was available. In view of the programme for Volume 8, Mr. Adams was then asked to include V. hederacea and V. sieberiana in his account. To allow time for this, the deadline for Violaceae was extended to 28 February (see Newsletter 29, page 25).

Dr. Seppelt's letter raises some more general questions:

(1) Is the Flora intended to be the 'gospel' on the Australian flora?

No, definitely not. Although we wish the flora treatments to be as good as possible, they are not intended as the last word on the subject. Indeed, we expect that the existence of the Flora will stimulate further research. We hope that there will eventually be new editions to replace the first treatment.

If ideal treatments were to be given for all groups, we could resign ourselves to a long drawn-out project that might never be completed. More Flora projects have failed from attempting to resolve every problem than from any other cause.

(2) Why the tight deadlines for work on the Flora?

The Flora has been envisaged as a project taking about 15 years to cover the Angiosperms; interspersing other plant groups will lengthen the time needed to complete the first edition. In the view of the Editorial Committee and the A.B.R.S. Advisory Committee, taking an even longer period would mean too slow a pace to keep up momentum and interest.

To see the project through as planned, three volumes need to be produced each year. Editing and financial constraints for printing require that these be evenly spread, and as a result deadlines must be set and met.

(3) Is appropriate use being made of the knowledge of specialists in particular groups?

The Editorial Committee seeks contributions and advice from specialists, but at times expertise may not be called on because the Committee does not know of its existence. However, this was not the problem here, where Dr. Seppelt was offered joint authorship.

More to the point in the present instance, if an author does not meet a deadline, does the Editorial Committee or Editor have the right to find another author to write that segment? The editors of "Flora Europaea" considered that they had this right and used it when necessary. We agree with this view.

In this case, the disagreement in taxonomic conclusions makes clear that the treatment to be presented in the Flora is not based uncritically on Dr. Seppelt's work.

Herbarium annotations, whether or not they lead to publication, are available for all subsequent workers. This is a general problem that all herbarium workers have to live with. It dates from long before this Flora project.

- (4) Is it reasonable that such a discrepancy exists between the treatment presented in the Flora and the views of another botanist who has worked on this group?

Probably yes. There are many questions of taxonomic judgement on which competent workers may well disagree.

Barbara B. Briggs for the  
Flora Editorial Committee,  
Royal Botanic Gardens,  
SYDNEY.

A.S. George,  
Executive Editor, Flora of Australia,  
Bureau of Flora and Fauna,  
CANBERRA CITY.

#### BANKS' FLORILEGIUM

As editors of the Banks' Florilegium project we feel that certain points made by D.E. Symon in the Austral. Syst. Bot. Soc. Newsletter 28: 32(1981) need both clarification and explanation.

Symon considers the worst aspect of the venture 'is that a 50 year copyright ban goes on the future use of any of these paintings preventing their reproduction at more reasonable rates'. In fact, the 50 year copyright refers only to the use of the copper plates and not at all to the original sketches and finished water colour drawings; added to which the copper plates themselves may be reproduced for research purposes. The Museum is also exploring various ideas, in co-operation with Australian publishers, with the object of making more widely available (and at a reasonable cost) reproduction of some of the historic Australasian items in the Museum's collections including those relating to the early voyages of discovery.

The Banks' Florilegium project allows for the first time the publication of the complete set of 738 18th-century copper plates originated by Sir Joseph Banks. It is a limited edition (100) because of the necessarily slow rate of production but every effort has been made by the publishers to ensure institutional placements. Subscriptions to forty sets have been placed from Australia which include the following libraries: Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne; State Library of South Australia; State Library of New South Wales; Art Gallery of Western Australia; and the National Library, Canberra.

The BM(NH) has always been aware of its international role and indeed its publishing programme has included many items of relevance to the historical aspects of Australian natural history, including J. Britten's - Illustrations of Australian plants collected in 1770 during Captain Cook's voyage ... (1900-1905), W. Dawson's - The Banks' Letters (1958) with supplements in 1962 and 1965, H. Carter's - Sheep and wool correspondence (1979), and J.B. Marshall's - Handwriting of Joseph Banks, his scientific staff and amanuenses (1978). P.I. Edwards' - The Journal of Peter Good, gardener on Matthew Flinders voyage to Terra Australis 1801-1803 (1981) is available both through the Museum and the Library of Australian History. A detailed and comprehensive Catalogue of the natural history drawings made on Captain Cook's first voyage 1768-1771 will be published in 1983. We are including in our volume not only full descriptions of the plant drawings but relating these to the actual herbarium specimens.

It is therefore difficult to accept Symon's points that the BM(NH) is 'conniving with publishers in accepting the long-term copyright blanket' or not taking seriously the availability of its collections to those 'who are most likely to look at, use and benefit from them'.

C.J. Humphries  
J.A. Diment

---

#### MEETING OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES AND NATIONAL COMMITTEES

The second meeting of representatives of Australian Scientific Societies and the chairmen of the Academy of Science National Committees organised by the Academy was held on 25th February. I attended as a representative of A.S.B.S.

This meeting was structured slightly differently from the previous one in that after some discussion on general topics we formed syndicate groups together with the Chairman of the National Committee with which each Society is associated. Some of you may not realise that our Society is a corresponding member with the Academy of Science's National Committee on Plant Sciences.

Much of the syndicate discussion in the Biological Sciences and the general discussion of the meeting related to problems such as funding and support from both government and private sources. Several matters of concern to ASBS. For example: a) the lack of political and general public appreciation of the necessity for basic research; b) the lack of adequate support at post-doctoral level to retain young scientists in Australia; c) the precarious position of many Australian scientific journals; d) problems associated with changing book bounty regulations. Considerable dissatisfaction was expressed over the selection processes of the Centres of Excellence particularly with respect to the chosen fields of science. The involvement of Australia in overseas scientific meetings and projects was broadly discussed especially in relation to its leadership role in South East Asian and Pacific regional meetings.

The general discussion following our syndicate groupings was dominated by the overwhelming feeling that more active and unified lobbying on behalf of science is necessary. It was suggested that the Academy play not only a catalytic role in supporting such a proposal, but also to investigate the possibility of employing (even by imposing a levy on scientists) a professional lobbyist to organise activities on behalf of the scientific community.

I wonder how ASBS can stimulate more support (i.e. public and political) for basic research - other than what is flowing through the Bureau of Flora and Fauna associated with the 'Flora of Australia' project. We do have avenues and discussion venues as a corresponding member of the Academy of Plant Sciences Committee and via our representative on its Flora Subcommittee. It was recognised that both Scientific Societies and National Committees should take initiatives in making submissions to ASTEC and that the scientific community should be better informed of ASTEC's enquiries.

The meeting was followed by an informal soiree of scientists and parliamentarians from both sides of the house. This was reasonably successful with free discussion. I found that I spent considerable time answering questions relating to the possible correlation between the overall role of women in science and the fact that I was at that time the only woman scientist present (only two women - both biologists - attended the meeting). I was pleased to find that a few of the politicians were well informed on some scientific matters.

Judy West  
Secretary

## Requests for Material

### XANTHORRHOEA

David Bedford and Alma Lee are undertaking the treatment of Xanthorrhoea for Flora of Australia, and hope to enlist the support of potential collectors who may be travelling in areas poorly represented by specimens in our herbaria. The areas from which data are particularly required are the eremean localities of early records, including Yilgarn (of the Elder Exploring Expedition: presumably the hills to the NNW. of Southern Cross and c. E. of Lake Deborah), Queen Victoria Spring and some 150 km NE. thereof in the Great Victoria Desert, the edge of the Gibson Desert N. of Wiluna, and an area E. of Laverton. These localities are said to support grass trees related to X. preissii but probably some at least are X. reflexa or X. thornntonii, but all should be arborescent forms.

Other unfamiliar (to us) areas are the SE. of South Australia, and Kangaroo Is. where the names X. tateana, X. semiplana, X. australis and X. minor have been used and misused. Occurrences on Yorke and Eyre Peninsulas would also be of interest, and we have heard of Xanthorrhoea occurring in W.A. around the Bight, but have no real information.

It is NOT NECESSARY to collect whole spikes of these often bulky plants, but is VERY IMPORTANT to record features of the habit and of the community (of Xanthorrhoea), and to collect some parts, as follows:-

(1) Record, from the plant collected: character of canopy: (is it  $\pm$  spherical, or with erect and reflexed sections? Are the leaves rigidly erect, flexuous, sharply reflexed, of any particular shade of green/greyish, sparse or dense?

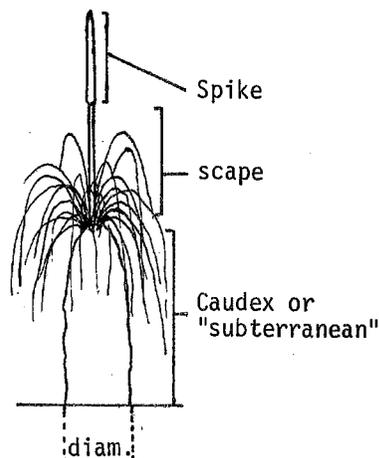
(2) Note other Xanthorrhoea plants in the community (occasionally the plants occur in isolation, but usually in a community) and record: if they have similar characters to the plant collected; if not, what differences and range of variation they show. Photographs are particularly useful here, but only if the locality is carefully recorded to match the collection.

(3) Can you detect any soil characters as factors in the habitat? - deep sand, red sand, rocky sandstone area/hills, igneous rocks/basic or acid, limestones.

(4) Collect a part of the spike and scape, c. 30 cm long, where they are in contact. Record any features in the fresh state: i) is the spike noticeably green, brown or pale? ii) is the scape ridged, smooth, glaucous or coloured?

Collect also, and roll up, some whole leaves, if possible including their bases (secateurs usually required).

Alma Lee would also appreciate collections of Lomandra spartea, L. juncea, and L. hastilis from any localities, also for Flora of Australia work.



---

#### HAEMODORUM

Dr. Terry Macfarlane, who recently joined the staff of the Western Australian Herbarium, is revising the genus Haemodorum (Haemodoraceae). As he won't be doing field work outside of the South West of W.A. he would appreciate receiving specimens from eastern and northern Australia. They should be accompanied by careful notes on flower colour (colour slides would be gratefully received).

---

### Selwyn Everist (1913—81)

On 21st October, 1981 Australian botany lost one of its "characters", Dr Selwyn L. Everist. It is not my intention to detail here an extensive obituary of Selwyn, something that has already been done admirably by Bob Johnson, Director of BRI, in last December's issue of Australian Weeds (Vol. 1(2) p. 42) and a forthcoming issue of the Queensland Naturalist.

While many will be well aware of his contributions to various branches of botany, it is perhaps not widely known by members what were his quite substantial contributions to the founding and early establishment of our Society and its Newsletter. It would be fair to say that had Selwyn not supported wholeheartedly the formation of such an association for Australian botanists and offered to produce the first issues of its Newsletter from BRI with Des Boyland as the first Editor, we would surely have had quite a

different organisation and organ for communication amongst members, if we had such at all. The challenge he set us in his inaugural article (Newsletter 1 page 1 and 2) has been taken to heart by Des and subsequent Editors and members to ensure that the melancholy possibility of the Newsletter perishing in the sands of apathy, has not been allowed to come to pass. Indeed, as can be seen from this current issue, our "seedling" is deeply rooted and flourishing, with every prospect of permanence for years to come. For Selwyn's early nurturing we should be grateful.

Selwyn will be remembered in the early history of A.S.B.S. for another reason. In January 1979, in Sydney, Selwyn gave the inaugural N.T. Burbidge Memorial Lecture. He spoke on one of his favourite topics, what he saw as the role of the various Herbaria in Australia. His lecture was published in Search 10(9): 308-311 (1979).

Had he been here today, I am sure Selwyn would have been proud to see that his faith in our fledgling Society was well-placed.

R. Henderson

---

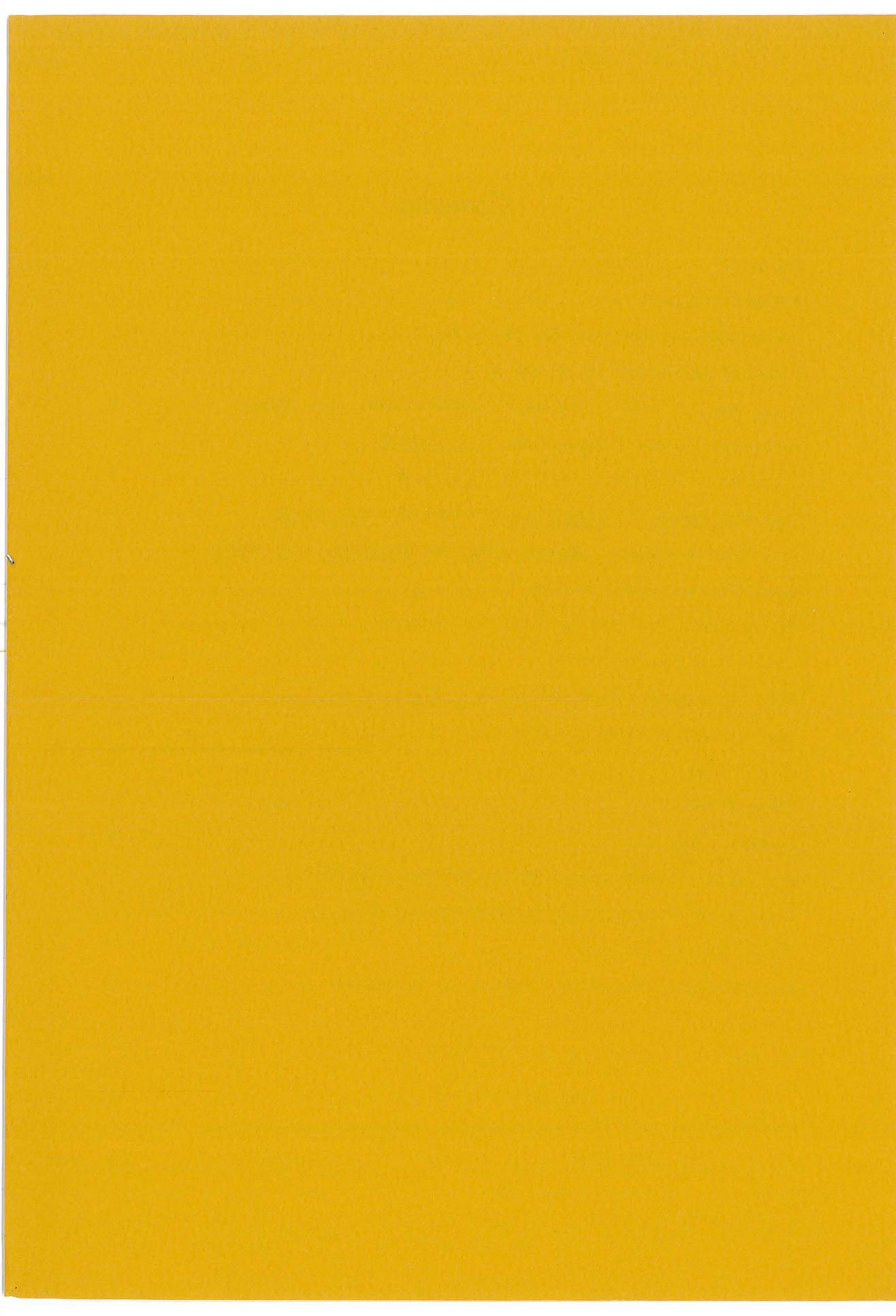
FLORA OF CENTRAL AUSTRALIA

REQUEST FOR CORRECTIONS

The Council has asked me to invite and collate amendments for use in a future edition of 'Flora of Central Australia'. The publishers (Reeds) have told me that they would not be prepared to make many alterations for the second printing but hoped that a full-scale second edition would be justified later.

Readers are requested to let me know of any corrections and other alterations which come to their notice. It would be appreciated if these corrections were communicated to me as they are noticed.

John Jessop  
State Herbarium of South Australia



## Contents

Editorial .....	3
President's Report .....	3
Newsletter Cover (Nos. 31, 32, 33 and 34) .....	4
Format of Newsletters 28, 29 and 30 .....	4
A New Home for NSW - The Robert Brown Building. <u>B.G. Briggs</u> .....	5
A Plea for a Sense of Proportion. <u>A.E. Orchard</u> .....	7
A Comment on Dr Orchard's Article. <u>B.J. Conn</u> .....	9
The Genus <u>Myrtus</u> or <u>Austromyrtus</u> in Australia? <u>N.B. Byrnes</u> .....	10
Australian Sapotaceae - <u>Amorphospermum</u> and <u>Niemeyera</u> . <u>G.P. Guymmer</u> .....	11
Notes from May Council Meeting .....	13
On the Plurality of Family Names. <u>W.R. Barker</u> .....	14
Conservation and the Society .....	15
Notes on Sporobolus in Australia. <u>B.K. Simon</u> .....	16
Report on the Flora of Australia .....	19
Chapter News .....	20
Personal News .....	20
Letters to the Editor .....	21
Meeting of Scientific Societies and National Committees .....	25
Requests for Material: <u>Xanthorrhoea</u> and <u>Haemodorum</u> .....	26
Selwyn Everist (1913-81) .....	27
Flora of Central Australia - Request for Corrections .....	28