

ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS INC.

EPACRIS STUDY GROUP

GROUP LEADER: *Ron Crowden*  
SECRETARY/TREASURER: *Dick Burns*

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*Epacris navicularis*

NEWSLETTER

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G,day,

Welcome to the Epacris Study Group . Maybe you've joined because you find Epacris [or the whole Epacridaceae family] an exciting group of plants. Or maybe you are simply curious, Or there is some other reason. I hope there's a diversity of reasons; it will make for a most interesting Study Group.

The best way to start out is to introduce ourselves.

Your Group Leader is Ron Crowden . Ron is a professional botanist, based at the University of Tasmania [Hobart] where he is Reader in Botany. He has devoted much of the last 20 years on the revision of the genus *Epacris*. The work has lead to Ron developing a strong affinity with these plants. His efforts with epacrids have extended beyond the laboratory to his bush-block home. Here he has had some success with propagation and cultivation of over 60 species of Epacrids. Approximately 25 of these are of the genus *Epacris*. Ron maintains these cultivated plants in pots. The species growing naturally on the block are *Epacris impressa* and *Epacris virgata*.

Your Secretary/Treasurer is Dick Burns.

I am a school teacher by profession, a bushwalker, gardener and field botanist [with no formal training] by interest. I became involved with the Epacrid family through my bushwalking. The distinctive character of Tasmania's flora and hence of the Tasmanian landscape is due to a large extent to this family. I find the delicacy of both the endemic Epacris species [15 at the latest count] and of the shared species [another 8 spp] most attractive.

My garden is a crowded double block, with the house as an incidental addition. I try to specialise in Tasmanian plants, but I'm a sucker for anything else as well. My collection is partly bought, partly exchanged or given, partly propagated by me. I started the garden in 1976.

We'd like to find out a bit about you as well, hence the accompanying questionnaire. I'd like to use the information collated from the questionnaire to profile as many of you as possible in forthcoming newsletters.

I also intend to circulate regularly a membership list. If anyone has problems with either of these ideas, please let me know. My reason is solely based on the need for members to get to know one another, so that there will be an effective

exchange of ideas, plants, desires, etc.

Here's the first bit of exchange.

DB's METHOD FOR EPACRIS PROPAGATION

In general, I'm a failure at seed propagation, so most of my efforts are via cuttings.

As well, most of my propagating is from bush-collected material.

My propagating house is of plastic, with benches and overhead watering, switched on automatically 3 or 4 times daily.

I use a propagating mix of 3:1 sharp sand:peat moss.

I prefer fairly firm tip cuttings about index-finger length. Because they are bush-collected, I do this work at any time of the year.

After the usual cutting and stripping, I dip in straight Rootex for 2sec., then place them in the cutting mix, about 10 to a 4" pot.

Roots are quite often well developed after about 3 weeks.

Epacrids have to be carefully handled because of the fineness of the roots.

Genera I have struck this way include **Epacris**, **Archeria**, **Prionotes**, **Trochocarpa**, **Sprengelia** and **Leucopogon**.

The stated Objectives of our Group are:

- a. to carry out a study of the biology of the **Epacris** species, its distribution, natural variants, cultivated variants, its ecology, flowering periods, pollinators, breeding systems, seed production, and of course all aspects of propagation and cultivation of these plants.
- a. to encourage a wider interest among plantsmen to grow **Epacris** species [through exchange of propagating material etc.], with the hope that many more will become regular garden plants in the future.
- c. to register as cultivars with the Australian Cultivar Registration Authority, any outstanding forms the Group judges as suitable.
- d. to establish a reference photographic collection.
- e. to search for and collate any published information relevant to this genus, which together with the outcomes from this Study Group will lead to the eventual production of a monograph on **Epacris**.
- f. to determine areas which might benefit from a concerted research investigation and if possible initiate programs among interested members. Alternatively such needs for research programs could be drawn to the attention of appropriate bodies.
- g. to eventually broaden the Group's involvement to include other Epacridaceae such as **Woolisia**, **Dracophyllum**, **Sprengelia**, **Richea**, and **Andersonia**.

*Dick Arons*  
Sept '92.

*An Epacrid quiz (my answers next issue - what will yours be?)*  
*When Jack & Jill set out it was winter. Which genus helped them?*  
*When they got to the top of the hill, which genus did they find?*  
*And they tumbled down because they tripped on a rolling fruit. Which one?*  
*The crown Jack broke had a short fringe. What was it called?*

