

Growing Notes

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One of the major objectives of the Arboretum is the importing and testing of new plants, and the introduction of those found useful into the nursery trade. This sounds very simple but is sometimes anything but that.

During the past several years the Arboretum has offered a number of new plants to the trade. The results have been most disappointing. Under the state law authorizing the Arboretum to sell plants to nurseries it specifically states that the plants sold shall not now be generally available in the trade. We have not only followed this precept to the letter but have made it a practice to offer only enough plants per individual nursery to provide propagating stock, thereby enabling nurseries to develop an adequate quantity for sale within a reasonable time.

These appear to be two main reasons why this program has not produced the desired results. The first is that unfortunately too many of the nurseries obtaining stock just resell it without propagating new stock. The second is that because the plants are new and relatively untried, many nurseries have difficulty in selling them. In addition, they do not have the means to publicize these new items. It is rather like the chicken and the egg. The public doesn't know the plants (and in too many instances the nurseryman does not learn enough about the plant to be able to sell it) and is reluctant to buy; moreover, the nurseries—understandably—won't grow what they can't sell.

Part of the problem may be solved in the future now that *Sunset* magazine has indicated they will be pleased to cooperate in publicizing new plant introductions as they become available. They too have a problem in that the public becomes very discouraged when they read of a new plant in *Sunset* and then can't find it.

At any rate, the Arboretum will continue to introduce new and worthwhile plants and continue to hope that the nursery trade will accept and promote them.

A new plant closely related to Eucalyptus which will soon be introduced by the Arboretum is *Angophora subvelutina*. The Australian common name is Rusty Gum, indicating its close affinity to Eucalyptus. The trees in the Arboretum plantings are approximately 25 feet tall, rather columnar in form and literally covered with clusters of white flowers when in bloom. The foliage is evergreen, heart-shaped at the base and resembles Eucalyptus in many ways. It is a neat tree, tolerant of a variety of soils and should be suitable for the smaller property. Use it at some distance so that the form of the tree, texture of the bark, and flowers can be seen to best advantage. Its only drawback, if it can be called such, is the relative short period of bloom—a week to ten days.

Eucalyptus torquata, the Coral Gum, is available in many nurseries but is

Evergreen and covered with clusters of white flowers during blooming period, Angophora subvelutina is an attractive tree suitable for the smaller property.



seldom seen in gardens. This small, flowering Eucalytus is one of the very finest for small gardens. It blooms for as long as two months or more and is very colorful. It seldom reaches more than 15 feet in height, requires little care and is attractive in or out of flower. Color will vary in seedlings but nearly all are attractive. Range is from red through coral to pink.

Geijera parviflora, the Wilga of Australia, is one of the more promising new introductions of recent years. I am pleased to report that it is available in nurseries and is being used as a street tree in Santa Barbara. In general appearance one might think of weeping willow when looking at *Geijera* although the color is gray-green rather than yellow-green. In its young stages it is roundheaded and branches rather low on the trunk. It gives little shade which is typical of so many plants native to the drier regions of Australia. It is said to reach a height of at least 25 feet but the tallest seen so far were about 12-15 feet. It shows great promise as a street tree.



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