

Growing Notes

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An appropriate subject in up-dating "Growing Notes" is *Kennedya rubicunda*, a plant that continues to thrive at the Arboretum even though frozen back rather severely several times. I would recommend it for use as a groundcover rather than as a vine. It is a rampant grower and does not reach over one foot in height except where it can climb upon shrubs or other forms of support. However the original assessment placing it in the category of "chiefly of botanical interest" still holds.

Anigozanthos flavida was mentioned in "Growing Notes" Vol. V, No. 4. It has continued to be a fine plant and is again highly recommended for those who enjoy the beautiful and unusual. Another *Anigozanthos*, *A. manglesii*, also mentioned earlier, has now bloomed and produced an even more spectacular flower. Experience at the Arboretum has indicated that it should be considered as a rather short-lived perennial, or possibly biennial, since it blooms the second year from seed (occasionally the first year), and then tends to die out.

This may be the result of inadequate knowledge of its growing requirements — or improper culture — as it seldom gets the complete rest that it receives in its hot, dry native habitat. It is a completely herbaceous plant, so we can hardly expect the best results when it is grown among other plants which require and receive summer watering. *A. manglesii* is easily grown from seed, and we will be conducting a number of experiments here at the Arboretum in an effort to determine the best method of culture for southern California. It is a real conversation piece with its ruby red and kelly green flowers, which are also excellent for cutting.

Another species, *A. rufa*, is being grown by at least one specialist in this area and we hope to have plants at the Arboretum soon. This is one of the finest of the *Anizoganthos* with red flowers held erect on 18-inch to 24-inch stalks. It is grown in cultivation in Australian gardens and gives every indication of garden adaptability here.

Kunzea sericea was first mentioned in Vol. VI, No. 1. Over the years our enthusiasm for this graceful shrub has increased. Now about eight feet tall, it retains the same graceful, vase-like form it had in 1956. It has grown with minimal care in the matter of watering and feeding. Unfortunately it does not set viable seed so that we will have to obtain additional supplies from Australia. Repeated attempts to propagate it vegetatively have also failed although some progress is being made in getting cuttings to callous. It continues to bloom prolifically and the long pendulous branches are covered with the typical myrtaceous flower heads so closely resembling *Eucalyptus ficifolia*. *Kunzea sericea* remains high on our list of potential plant introductions.

Those readers who remember the Note of Vol. VI, No. 2 on seedling Jacarandas, will be interested to know that all the seedlings bloomed violet blue. This was a disappointment, but one of the results that must be accepted when growing seedlings of selections.

It is a pleasure to report that *Gamolepis chrysanthemoides*, mentioned in early "Growing Notes," is now well established in the nursery trade here.

A few random notes on plants previously mentioned: *Loropetalum chinense* can again be found in nurseries. Not easily but plants are available occasionally. The Cassia noted in Vol. XIII, No. 4 as *Cassia glauca* has now been determined to be *Cassia surattensis* var. *suffruticosa*.

It is always gratifying to have one of the Arboretum introductions become popular with both the nurserymen and the public. The trailing African Daisy (*Osteospermum fruticosum*) is one such plant. It is now being grown in large quantities and is widely used as a groundcover throughout much of southern California.

The "something new" for this issue is Agapanthus 'Queen Anne.' This is a medium height Agapanthus reaching about 18 inches to 2 feet. The flowers are a very rich, deep blue borne in heads approximately 3 to 4 inches in diameter. It is one of the completely deciduous varieties and it is easy to damage the plant if extreme care is not taken when cultivating the planting area when it is dormant. The size of the flower heads makes it useful for cutting and the plant as a whole is just right for the smaller garden.

In future "Growing Notes" I hope to provide an additional list of germination times for some of the lesser known plants, as well as notes on many of the new plants being tested at the Arboretum. Some brief items on seed sowing mixtures, together with information on special treatments for difficult-to-germinate seed will be among other topics discussed. Finally if any readers have plants on which they would like to see Notes, drop a line to the author, in care of *Lasca Leaves*, and he will try to help.



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