A COMBINED TASMANIAN APPROACH TO RARE AND THREATENED SPECIES

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Several organisations and individuals in Tasmania have been working on rare and threatened species. However, much of this research, propagation and legislation work was being done in a less than organised and co-operative manner. Flowing on from the ex situ plant conference in Canberra earlier this year and a subsequent visit to Tasmania by Don Palk (the Director of the Center for Plant Conservation at the Missouri Botanic Gardens), it was decided to co-ordinate rare and threatened species work in Tasmania.

The result has been the formation of the Endangered Plants Recovery Committee, comprising representatives of the Dept of Parks, Wildlife & Heritage, the Dept’s of Geography & Environmental Studies and Plant Science at the University of Tasmania, the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, the Forestry Commission, the Society for Growing Australian Plants, Greening Australia, Endangered Species Network and local City Councils. This committee results in an exchange of information and a co-ordinated approach to addressing the problems of rare and threatened species. It means that whilst botanists and ecologists address the problem of habitat and plant ecology, the propagation expertise of the botanic gardens is used and that Council ground staff responsible for reserves can contribute to the maintenance of suitable habitat. The principle value of the group is in allowing exchange of information and in preventing duplication of work. It also enables helpful criticism to be made of various programs, such as the species recovery plans prepared by the Dept Parks, Wildlife & Heritage.

It is also planned to run field days where all the people involved in working on rare and threatened species can meet in the field to share expertise and knowledge. The first of these days will be directed towards Tasmanian endemic species of the family Epacridaceae. It is hoped that by combining propagation expertise, knowledge of plant ecology and viewing natural habitats, that some of the problems associated with propagating and maintaining Epacridaceous species can be overcome.

The second field trip will be to visit one of our most threatened habitats - grasslands. This field trip will form part of the Ron Smith Memorial Lecture Seminar and Field Weekend in October, sponsored by the Society for Growing Australian Plants and the Dept of Geography & Environmental Studies. People working on all aspects of grasslands, including Dr Bob Parsons from La Trobe University, will be able to view the conditions and groupings which occur naturally, and to discuss propagation, re-introduction and habitat management.

The results of a co-operative approach by all agencies and organisations involved in research and management of rare and threatened species will contribute to the conservation of plant diversity.

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in 1992. It is hoped that this liaison will continue and that trees can be planted on an annual basis.

Each seedling planted will be listed on a tree register and monitored so that in years to come a real increase in habitat can be calculated. Being able to supply seedlings of provenanced stock is an excellent way of shifting emphasis of habitat conservation back to the landowner and providing them with a visual means of their participation in the project. The growing of trees by the Botanical Gardens has enabled this vital part of habitat expansion to become a reality and their help is greatly appreciated.

In addition to the assistance from the Botanical Gardens, all major landowners have agreed to conserve White Gum and will be planting the trees as boundary trees and windbreaks to form corridors of habitat. Other organisations such as the district school, Forestry, Municipal Council and the Department of Roads and Transport are participating on the project and are helping to make it one which is achieving tremendously positive results.

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