

# PLANT GROUP CUTTINGS

Snippets from the May Plant Study Group meeting held at Cuz' abode.

Our surprise guest of the evening was none other than Graeme Moulden - EDAS life member. Graeme had a few problems that he wanted us to solve. The first of these was identifying a cryptocoryne from a sample leaf. This was a plant which was growing prolifically in his home tank. His problem was what Crypt. Did he actually have?

Our difficulty was that it is almost impossible to identify a crypt. from a single leaf. Most of us had an opinion of what it could be or at least what it wasn't, but there was no certainty in our conclusions.

To properly identify a plant you need to see the entire plant and a flower. We asked Graeme to bring a whole plant next time so that we could limit the possibilities.

Another identification proved much easier - as this was *Ambulia limnophila*. A plant sometimes incorrectly identified as a Cabomba. Studying the leaves of this plant will always show the difference.

Graeme said his earliest attempt at an 'Underwater Garden' set up was overtaken by a single species of plant. Why is it so he asked?

In answer I said we must always keep rampant plants in check, otherwise they will dominate and eliminate their competition.

Diane Walstead goes to great lengths to explain this phenomenon in her book, "Ecology of the Planted Aquarium". (Available from the EDAS library).

Simply put it means that you must keep the growth of any plant within the boundaries that you set for the decor you wish to maintain. Otherwise it will be the survival of the fittest.

Graeme also wanted to know what could be done to save the plantlets which form on the runners of *Echinodorus*. (Amazon Swords).

Two methods first try pegging the runner down into the sand so the plantlets can take root in the substrate by themselves. When strong enough to survive without the parent plant, they can be detached. Not before a strong root system has developed to independently feed the youngster!

It is very important that the plantlet be 'rolled off' the runner TOWARDS the parent plant. This will ensure clean separation of the complete plant, which can then be planted elsewhere.

Paul suggested the use of "Dino Dung" under or around the *Echinodorus* for more robust growth.

Graeme said he would plant his new plants in pots what size would we recommend. A small as possible about the size of a pressure pak cap was ideal. Ensure there are several holes in the bottom to allow for slow circulation of water.

Ron said he had tried using Zip top plastic bags to start off the young plants. Boiled sphagnum moss with a little cow manure- put the roots into the bag and Zip it around the 'neck' so the plant has its head out. Great.

Paul showed us his latest test kit from America. It is a potassium tester and costs about \$45 for approximately 20 tests. The question arose why would you want to perform this particular test ?

Paul replied that he was researching the effects of oversupply of potassium. He explained that while potassium was one of the required micronutrients, an oversupply results in the growth of algae. A figure of 2 ppm was considered too high. I said we would be glad to hear the results in the near future.



North Queensland Lace plant

I told the folks that *Aponogeton bulbosus*, the North Queensland Laceplant was available. I'm told these plants have been cultivated - not collected from the wild. They are a beautiful plant and it's really worth getting hold of one or two to grace your display.

It had to happen Sonia wanted to relate her latest attempt at getting rid of those Malayan burrowing snails. She absolutely hates them with a vengeance. This brings tears to Ron and Neil's eyes. She froze her gravel in the freezer. Didn't work. She cooked the gravel in water at 40 ° - didn't work.

She added half a bucket of cooking salt didn't work. Each attempt left some snails alive to carry on the tradition of Ye shall have burrowing snails forever and a day.

Ken had generously donated some young *Echinodorus sangii* to members of the group. Also Cuz had some seeds of the Water Canna to distribute along with some *Echinodorus macrophyllus*

Thanks guys.  
Eddie Tootell,