

## Propagation in the Community

Jane Edmanson

Prahran, Vic 3181, Australia

[edmanson@bigpond.net.au](mailto:edmanson@bigpond.net.au)

*Keywords:* restoration, society, schools, education

### Summary

I was born in Mildura, in North-West Victoria, growing up with horticulturist parents who farmed oranges, grapefruit, avocados and lemons, all on the banks of the Murray River. It was a family affair, from the growing and harvesting the fruit, delivering to the markets, plus a venture showing tourists how a citrus farm operates. My profession started as a secondary teacher in rural Victoria, and after a few years on, an impulse got a job at the State Schools Nursery. Quickly my love of plants became an obsession, with propagation of Australian natives in tubes and perennial plants to the fore. I loved giving garden talks on all sorts of topics, and still give many to garden clubs and schools. I moved onto becoming

a radio and television personality, and a voice for the gardening community. The long running ABCs Gardening Australia has been a joy for all its 34 years, and I continue to enjoy presenting it.

I have had so much pleasure in the many different aspects that a love of spreading the word about gardening takes me. I co-owned a retail nursery in Melbourne, showing how to deal with common problems that arise in suburban gardens (how many lemon tree questions arise?). I have been involved in establishing a variety of organisations to bring all sorts of people to the joy of gardening, often involving propagation as a domestic activity. For instance,

setting up Men of the Trees branch to re-plant a large number of trees, the Rail Trail Association, the Australian Garden History Association, the Ornamental Plants Collections and Horticultural Therapy Association. The Schools Gardens Awards is a wonderful garden-based program for all schools and students of all ages, and I have

## INTRODUCTION

I grew up in Mildura, a rural town in north-west Victoria, and was surrounded by orchards of apple, pear, oranges, plums etc. growing in the rich alluvial soils of the mighty Murray River. Growing up in a citrus farm, I saw the operations that needed to be accomplished to get the fruit into the store and from there to the market. Although I started as a rural teacher, I quickly moved to run my own nursery and worked for State School Nursery. My passion is not only gardening and planting but getting others to grow plants. With this passion, I moved on to become a radio and television personality and a voice for gardening in Victoria for the past 30 years through radio and long running ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation) program Gardening Australia. Here is my view of gardening in the community.

### **Plant Propagation for Home Gardeners**

Where does the mystery and magic of growing your own plants start? Invariably when you are starting out, maybe as a wee kid, around six years old. Probably from a family member, grandmothers especially, are full of enthusiasm. Many early attempts at propagation, start at either seed in early days, bulbs and then moving on to cuttings, sometimes with lots of failures. However, by asking many questions, enthusiastic help

been part of it for its 40 years plus in existence.

Gardening in the community is very much alive and well, and I would like to promote young people to venture into our wonderful horticultural world.

from family who were horticulturalists, my success rate improved, and it became a lot of fun.

The process of plant propagation is intriguing, most people being really interested in the final product— seeds for lettuce, acorns for future shadedown the track, blueberries for their fruit. Once hooked, it is a discovery of how challenging and exciting the hobby can be. The “laws” that govern propagation will dispel a lot of the mystique, it is not rocket science for a beginner, but can have more elaborate setups; hot beds, small greenhouses, a misting system as one improves.

Whether you decide to start off with only a few plants as a hobby or growing for a “cause” for a local conservation group, or for the local school or church— it doesn’t matter. As William Blake, the English poet wrote, by planting a seed “you hold infinity in the palm of your hand”.