

at first a shining yellow-green. By the time these leaves are well developed, bundles of flower buds are appearing on the previous year's wood. When the flowers are mature (in the middle of October) most of the old leaves have gone, leaving the flowering branchlets uncluttered but sheltered overhead by the expanded crown of new leaves on the young shoots. Viewed distantly in September and October, mahoe trees have a characteristically yellowish appearance caused by the fading of the old leaves and the later growth of pale new ones on young outer branches. Thus it is possible, even at a distance, to predict the presence of flowers by observing the stage of leaf development.

Note on the Growing of *Xeronema callistemon*

FROM a sowing of 1966/67 seed, Mr John Moreland has at this date some 50 plants about a year and a quarter old, 4 or 5 inches high, with seven leaves in a fan. They take $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 months to germinate, have grown most noticeably in the last six months and are still growing slowly. These seedlings are in boxes, some under glass, some in the open. Both are growing even at this time of year, but slowly. More than 100 of the plants that germinated were lost, possibly through damping off. They need water, but very good drainage is absolutely essential.

Mr Moreland also sowed some 1967/68 seed in May and is looking for "heads" pushing up through the soil any day now. In his experience, seeds sown within four or five months of ripening are more likely to germinate than those left till the following spring.

Incidentally, in the Begonia House in the Lady Norwood Rose Garden, a plant is growing well in a copper tub with 20 fans and 3 or 4 old flower stalks.

The plant at 26 Ventnor Street had 31 flower heads in 1966/67. In 1967/68 there were only about 20.

Several young specimens of *Xeronema callistemon* are being grown at Otari Museum but, because of the frost hazard there, positions have had to be specially chosen. The *Xeronema* has proved difficult to grow from divisions, is liable to be killed by frost and may take up to 20 years for its flowering. There are records of its flowering at 22 years at Te Aroha, and at 12 years in Auckland.

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