

## ***EDITOR'S COMMENT***

Welcome to the revived Lathyrus Lathyrism Newsletter. After some delays in implementation it is done. Response to the proposed reissuing of the newsletter was enthusiastic, thank you to all that responded.

As many of you know this newsletter has not been issued since 1993 and was originally edited by Dr Avtar Kaul, who is still a keen supporter and now with CARE International in the USA. The newsletter has been sorely missed by those *Lathyrus* researchers wishing to maintain contact with colleagues geographically remote and not easily contactable. The newsletter has several aims: (1) to increase cooperation between researchers internationally both within and between disciplines. (2) To provide quick access to *Lathyrus* and lathyrism research and other information on-line. (3) To provide information on E-mail access to involved researchers, for ease of contact. (4) To provide research summaries and other relevant information in a written form as an alternative to electronic access.

Communication between different scientific disciplines is not always as good as it could be and the need for this in the case of *Lathyrus* and lathyrism research is self-evident. Research is conducted currently in Central Asia, Ethiopia, the Middle East, Europe, North America, South America, China, Australia, and the Indian sub-continent. For many researchers there is little knowledge of the progress made in other regions within their own discipline, quite apart from progress in separate disciplines. As can be seen just from the list of current articles there are many diverse studies being performed. The newsletter should provide a place for debate in some areas as well as a place for wider dissemination of results. In turn this should provide the basis for continued and consistent international cooperation across disciplines. This can only benefit the farmers and consumers of *Lathyrus*, which is hopefully the motivation of the contributors to the newsletter. The benefits of, particularly *Lathyrus sativus*, in dryland agriculture are apparent but not as well studied as you would expect. The consequences of lathyrism are well known, but all contributing factors are not well understood. The methods of providing a safe crop in regions where it is widely grown are neither implemented nor fully understood.

Assistance in editing is provided by the following and is gratefully acknowledged:

Prof. Fernand Lambein  
Physiological Chemistry  
University of Ghent, Belgium

Dr P.N. Mathur  
International Plant Genetic Resources Institute  
(IPGRI)  
Office for South Asia  
New Delhi, India

Ms Valerie Palmer  
TWMRF  
Portland, Oregon, USA

Dr A. Sarker  
International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry  
Areas (ICARDA)  
Aleppo, Syria

Prof. Peter S. Spencer  
Professor of Neurology  
Oregon Health Sciences University  
Portland, Oregon, USA

Thanks is also due to the Centre for Legumes in Mediterranean Agriculture (CLIMA) and the Third World Medical Research Foundation (TWMRF) for supporting the newsletter.

Any comments on improving the newsletter in the future or any other suggestions are very welcome, contributions from readers are imperative to maintaining the direction and momentum of the newsletter. Any research articles or other contributions can be submitted to the editor. The next edition of the newsletter will be in February 2001, consequently any submissions will need to be received before 31 January 2001. Most research submissions should be approximately 1500 words and can include a small number of tables or figures, photographs of the author and of research are encouraged as they are easily included in the on-line version. Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion is the preferred layout for research summaries, although this can be altered as necessary. Abstracts are also welcome, if they have been published elsewhere then full acknowledgment will be made.

It would be of great help if all who are interested in the newsletter let me know whether they prefer to access the on-line version or receive the printed version (which will have a limited number of pictures included). If you have already let me know do not feel obliged to do so again.

*Colin Hanbury*

**Contact details:**

Dr Colin Hanbury  
Centre for Legumes in Mediterranean Agriculture  
(CLIMA)  
University of Western Australia  
Nedlands 6907  
Australia

Email: [chanbury@agric.wa.gov.au](mailto:chanbury@agric.wa.gov.au)

---