



Dave Quicke shows Environment and Heritage Minister Dr Judy Edwards a precious specimen of the climbing, purple-flowered Traveller's Joy clematis. The specimens became the half-millionth flora species to be added to CALM Herbarium's collection and its database.

Photo by Norm Bailey

Kulin farmer's discovery

A LIFETIME love of plants has made Kulin farmer Dave Quicke the proud collector of the WA Herbarium's half-millionth flora specimen. (See CALM NEWS March-April 2001 issue—page 1.)

Spotting a purple-flowered species of the traveller's joy clematis made Dave stop in his tracks on a water supply reserve near his 1,700-hectare Wheatbelt farm.

"I'd never seen this type before," he said of the November 1999 experience. "There were about 30—not the white-flowered species that grows abundantly in the area but a climbing, purple-flowered version," he said.

He took the new specimen

by Sue McKenna

to the Kulin-Kondinin Regional Herbarium, where he is president.

Its details were added to the WA Herbarium's database and the attractive plant became its 500,000th specimen.

Dave's love of plants has seen him elected as president of the local wildflower society and working as a CALM volunteer. He is also concerned with the salinity that threatens his farm.

The land is planted with 33,000 oil mallees as part of a CALM-State Salinity Strategy project that Dave expects will increase in size as new plants

are tested to beat salinity and provide crop revenue.

"We started planting in 1994 so the first lot will flower this year. We're hoping to process the crop at the oil mallee plant being established in Narrogin," he said.

He set up test bores last year to see how much water was coming up under the oil mallee paddocks.

"We found there was none. Hopefully we'll be able to divert any runoff into a big creek and stop the area flooding again, so that will be great," he said.

Dave added he might set up a seed orchard on a remnant vegetation block that has oil mallees, banksias, melaleuca and acacia trees.

