

AUSTRALIAN NATIVE PLANTS SOCIETY AUSTRALIA

HAKEA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER No. 82

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Dear members.

The lovely autumn weather has finished and the cold wet days of winter have arrived. It also announces the new flowering season of Hakeas. Already *Hakea ruscifolia* has flowered and now we see the pincushion flowers of *Hakea laurina* and the *Hakea petiolaris* subspecies. Also flowering are *Hakea bicornata*, *megadenia* and *orthorrhyncha* ssp *filiformis*. When the sun shines it is lovely to wander around the garden and admire the flowers and watch the bees and birds gathering nectar.

Visits to members gardens.

During April I took some time away from Elliminyt and visited the gardens of Susan and Ken Ehrenberg, Neil and Wendy Marriott, and Royce and Jeanne Raleigh.

The Ehrenberg garden is situated in a lovely setting of a large treed block of sloping land with *Eucalypts viminalis*, *obliqua* and *radiata* forming the top story. They have cleared only a small portion for a house and some garden beds. The soil consists of about 150mm of loam overlying clay. The rainfall is quite high, probably around 1000mm as it is near Mount Macedon, some 60klms northwest of Melbourne. They have planted some 120 species of *Hakea* in recent years and it was interesting to see how they were growing, especially those from drier areas. Many had not been in long enough to reach flowering stage but showed promise of great things to come. The garden beds had been slightly raised to shed water and composted horse manure spread around. I am not sure they need manure but it did not seem to be affecting them. There were a couple of older plants of *H dohertyi* and *multilineata* which had flowered and set seed.

The Marriott garden in the Black Range south of Stawell is of course renowned for its collection of *Grevilleas* but Neil and Wendy also have quite a collection of other natives, as well as including about 150 *Hakea* species. The soil is granitic sand with large boulders of granite appearing above the surface at various places. The drainage properties are excellent but looking at the healthy plants there must be some water retention at depth. The winters are cold with some frosts and summer hot and dry. Rainfall is mainly winter-spring but is not always reliable being 350- 600mm. Plants that are considered frost tender are planted up against granite boulders which retain some heat at night. I am pleased to see just how well the *Hakeas* grow in this soil and climate, and the pH must be right as there is no sign of mineral deficiency. Many of these *Hakeas* are now at flowering stage and setting seed. Neil and Wendy try to plant three of each species. Due to the hot summers the species from cooler and wetter areas such as *Hakea ferruginea*, *Hakea cucullata*, *Hakea elliptica* and *Hakea dohertyi* need some extra watering. Shortly they will be trying the tropical species planted up against boulders to see how they respond to the cooler climate.

The Raleigh garden is over fifty years old and is located southeast of Horsham in the northern Grampians at Wartook. The "Asses Ears" are a magnificent rock feature in the range which their garden is at the foot of. Royce was the first leader of the *Hakea* Study Group way back in about

1970 and so Hakeas have always been part of the garden. Some of the Hakeas are very old and withstood the yearly changes in climate, which consists of cool winters and hot summers with rain mainly in the winter-spring but can be very variable. When they first moved to Wartook over fifty years ago the rainfall was about 600mm per year but has declined in recent years. The soil is a gravelly clay in the front part of the property and beyond the creek at the rear a beautiful deep sand that Banksias grow magnificently in.

There are still many Hakeas growing in the gravelly clay such as *francisiana*, *multilineata*, *meisneriana*, *elliptica* and *pandanicarpa*. The beds are built up and deep drains dug around the perimeter to shed water as the gravelly soil can become quite wet in winter. Royce has covered beds with 100mm of scoria and when he tells you how much he has shoveled you wonder where he got the energy from to do it as the garden consists of a couple of acres. Over the years Royce and Jeanne have grown over 100 Hakea species but their garden at present probably has about 90 species.

The back garden area does have some Hakea species in it. Royce grew *Hakea aculeata* on sandy loam near the creek for a great number of years and it died recently. However, they planted two on the deep sand and they look very healthy. I would like to see more inland Hakeas planted on the deep sand as it is moisture retaining at depth but in maintaining a large garden is a mammoth task. Jeanne is an excellent propagator.

These gardens along with others across Australia are making a great contribution to the knowledge of the Hakea genus. They also offer the chance for members to see at firsthand how adaptable Hakea species can be to soil and climate and encourage members to try more species. They also act as a backup to Hakeas in the wild that are endangered.

Welcome to new members.

We welcome Claire Mullins from Armidale, NSW. Also Christopher Steven. I think Christopher may have joined off the Australian Plants Web site and I do not have details of his address. If any member knows him please let me know.

We also welcome Helen Goldney from Unley in SA and Bob Howard from Bickley in the Perth foothills. Bob and his wife have 26 acres on land some of which is still bush. He hopes to grow all the Hakea species, which is great news and I know the current WA members will support him in their endeavors.

Hakea lehmanniana.

Every year I receive requests for plants or seed of *Hakea lehmanniana*. The blue colored flowers are the attraction but their intensity of the blue can vary from plant to plant. Seed is not always easy to come by so we need someone to grow a lot from cuttings.

Member reports.

Phil Trickett and Catriona Bate from Milton in NSW have commenced replanting of their garden after the 2.6m of rain in 2022 drowned many of their plants. Those that survived such as *clavata*, *erinacea*, *victoria*, 'Burrendong Beauty', *verrucosa*, *bakeriana*, *lasiocarpha*, *obtusata*, 'Stockdale Sensation', *petiolaris* x *laurina*, and *linearis* are flowering now in June. Phil has grafted plants of *strumosa*, *petiolaris* x *laurina*, *pandanicarpa* ssp. *crassifolia*, *megalosperma*, *neurophylla*, plus seed grown tropical Hakeas *pedunculata*, *arborescens*, and *persiehana* to plant.

Bob Howard from Bickley in WA in the Darling escarpment has sent me a list of Hakeas he has growing in his area plus those he has germinated. His property of 26 acres is roughly divided into three segments, one third natural bush of Jarrah woodland on laterite soils, one third with understorey cleared, and one third cleared where their house is situated. On his property are Hakeas

amplexicaulis, cyclocarpa, lissocarpha, and loranthifolia. In nearby bush are Hakeas cristata, erinacea, incrassata, myrtoides, petiolaris ssp petiolaris, prostrata, ruscifolia, spathulata, stenocarpa, and trifurcata. He has seed grown plants of ambigua, corymbosa, cucullata, cygna, erecta, falcata, lehmanniana, multilineata, and cutting grown Burrendong Beauty to be planted. In all Bob could have thirty-four species established before long, which is a great start. Keeping them going over the initial summer maybe a challenge but I am sure the WA members will give him some advice.

Claire Mullin from Armidale, NSW is trying to grow all the Hakeas that have cold and frost tolerance. Armidale in winter can have many frosts down to minus 5 degrees C and hence she is limited in the number she can grow. However she is growing H laurina, petiolaris ssp. trychophylla, microcarpa, sericea, decurrens ssp. physocarpa, macrorrhyncha, eriantha, macraeana, ochroptera, multilineata, orthorrhyncha, and pachyphylla. Up against the house she has planted cinerea, bakeriana and obtusa where some protection from frosts is provided.

Propagation.

I have propagated a number of species over the summer–autumn period, arborescens, persiehana, pendunculata, stenophylla sp. stenophylla, myrtoides, psilorrhyncha, aculeata, ferruginea, hastata, trifurcata, dohertyi, meisneriana, and recently lasiantha.

The tropical species, arborescens, pedunculata and persiehana have been potted on into large pots and left in the hot house over winter with the hope they will survive and grow into larger plants with a view to planting some of them out in late spring when the temperature starts to rise. I did grow them at Strathmerton in northern Victoria in the open on deep sand, but they were never robust plants as probably the cold winters and lack of a more loamy soil hindered their development.

Hakea stenophylla ssp stenophylla comes from the Exmouth area in Western Australia where the climate is warm and rain is very unreliable. It grows in sandy soils and has some cold tolerance but is frost sensitive. Its leaves are very similar to Hakea arborescens but is a low bush whereas Hakea arborescens can be a tall shrub.

Hakea psilorrhyncha germinates easily but seems to be sensitive to moisture. When potting on into tubes I often lose plants because the potting mix is not porous enough. In the ground too it seems to want very well drained soils. Has anyone grown this one successfully?

Hakea dohertyi from the high blue mountains west of Sydney also seems to need very well drained soils with a cool root run to succeed in our gardens.

Germination results are best with fresh seed. The seed of tropical species seems to lose its viability within three years.

I am still looking for a contact in the Alice Springs area to collect seed of the Hakea species that grow there. If you know someone who would be willing to help please let me know.

Financial.

Balance forward	4148-83
Subscriptions	75-00
Expenditure	
Newsletter No.81, post and print	70-70
Balance forward.	\$4150-13

Hakea strumosa group.

Over the years I have written about most of the Hakea species; however, it does not hurt to revisit some and in this case many of the species in the strumosa group tend to flower in the second half of the year, which means by the time you receive this newsletter they could be in flower in your garden. The group comprises vittata, preissii, newbeyana, commutata, circumulata,

bicornata, strumose, and cycloptera.

Hakea vittata is a little known species although not endangered. I have not come across it often in my travels as it occurs on the Eyre Peninsula, Kangaroo Island, and in the Coorong of South Australia. It grows in sandy soils which often are alkaline in mallee scrub. The shrub can grow to 2m high but is mostly smaller. The green leaves tend to be dense, simple, 2-8cm long x 0.8-1.5mm wide with a mucro. The flowers are axillary, small, white and not very attractive. The fruit is beaked, ovate 1.3-2.4cm long and 0.9- 1.5cm wide with the surface being smooth to rugose. The unusual feature of *Hakea vittata* is that in many plants the leaves have the presence of witches broom galls resembling tight clusters of small leaves, and the splitting of the fruit past the seed tip only on the red brown wood side. It grows slowly here in Elliminyt due to the higher rainfall and soils which do not drain as well as in its natural occurrence. I have seen it for sale in the South Australian Forest Nursery at Murray Bridge.

Hakea circumulata. This *Hakea* occurs in the sand heaths between Perth and Geraldton and for some distance inland. It tends to be a low compact spreading shrub. The leaves are short, 1-5cm long and terete with 0.9-1.7mm diameter with a mucro. The inflorescences consist of 6-12 flowers, terminal and axillary that are pinky white in color. The fruit is quite distinctive, obliquely ovate 1.8-2.5 cm long x 1.2-1.7cm wide with a tuberculate surface. The seed is about 20mm long with the wing encircling the seed, and is grey-white in color. This species in Elliminyt is flowering at present and is quite showy. It must have a well drained and sunny position to do well. Some of the *Hakea* growers in the Wimmera area of Victoria have had success with this one.

Hakea strumosa. This is a small shrub growing to one meter tall in sandy soils in the wheatbelt of Western Australia where winters are cool and wet and summers hot and dry. It occurs from the Tammin- Merredin area south to Bremer Bay to Esperance. I have not often come across it but its distribution is over quite a wide area. A report came in recently of a plant being found north of the Stirling Ranges so its distribution may have been wider before land clearing took place. The green leaves are simple, terete, 2.5-11cm long x 1.3-1.8mm diameter with a mucro to 5mm long. The axillary inflorescences consist of mainly four small yellow and red flowers in spring. The perianth parts of the flower splay open to expose the nectar source to encourage pollination perhaps by other mouse-like creatures rather than birds. The fruit is quite large, obliquely obovate 3.5-5cm long x 1.9- 3.4cm wide with small beak and rugose surface. The seed is large, semicircular and with the wing off-white with black lines enclosing the whole of the seed body. This species has not done well in Elliminyt as it was crowded in by other plants. In lower rainfall gardens across the Wimmera and in members gardens in South Australia it has grown and flowered very well.

It has been a very cold winter so far but without frosts in Elliminyt. After a very wet period in mid May to mid June the rain has tapered off allowing the top soil to dry out and hopefully this will continue for the next month as we do not need the 750mm of annual rainfall to keep the *Hakeas* growing. The early flowering *Hakeas* have flowered profusely and hopefully will set seed. *Hakea chromatropa* has been a mass of white flowers and grows very well here. The grass leaf *Hakeas* are in flower now with their pinkish blooms. After about six years in the ground *Hakea bakeriana* is finally going to flower.

This year the birds have multiplied significantly both in number of species as well as individual species numbers. As the plants mature and close in there is plenty of refuge and nesting sites. The constant chirping and movement of birds, especially from the smaller ones, gives another dimension to having native gardens and including plenty of prickly *Hakeas*.

I wish you all happy *Hakea* growing as the springtime approaches.

Cheers, Paul.



Hakea scoparia ssp. *trycherica*



Hakea multilineata



Hakea cristata

(all photos Paul Kennedy)



Hakea longiflora