

AUSTRALIAN NATIVE PLANTS SOCIETY (AUSTRALIA)

HAKEA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER No.86

October 2024

ISSN0727-7008

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Dear members,

This newsletter is the fiftieth since I took over as leader of the Hakea Study Group seventeen years ago. It has been a journey of sharing and learning with you and along the way making many friendships. This year also marks my having been a member of the Australian Plants Society for fifty years. Oh how time has flown.

The weather around Australia has been one of contrasts. Good rains across the Outback and above average falls in Queensland and NSW. After a long hot summer in Western Australia the rains have come and most districts have received above-average rainfall for this time of the year. However, here in southwest Victoria the situation is grim with only about 200mm of rain to date when the yearly average is 700mm. It is the driest in 84 years. I have been watering my garden through winter as there is no subsoil moisture. I hope we receive good spring rains as going into summer in present conditions will be very stressful on plants.

My Hakea losses so far have been minimal. A Hakea lasianthoides, the northern form, which I did not expect to die as in its normal occurrence it tolerates hot summers. A six meter high Hakea petiolaris ssp trichophylla, which died unexpectedly after flowering in August. The Hakea salicifolia from the Sydney region is looking very sick and even if it survives it will look terrible with a couple of green branches amongst all the dead branches.

The Western Australia August Excursion.

As usual this was a great trip with nine people being involved. We assembled at Quairading and after lunch drove down some ten kilometers to look at Hakea preissii growing on the edge of a salt lake. These plants are bushy and multi-stemmed, suggesting that they are lignotuberous or new plants emerging from underground roots. They are certainly tolerant of salty soils.

After passing through Corrigin and heading for Kondinin we stopped some 20 kilometers short of Kondinin to look at some roadside plantings of Hakea. There are a number of plants of Hakea bucculenta, francisiana and hybrids between the two species. We looked at these to differentiate which were pure species and those that were not. The Hakea bucculenta with a single longitudinal vein were pure species, whereas the plants with three longitudinal veins were hybrids. At the very end of the plantation was a plant of Hakea pendens. How it got to be growing here is that in the nursery some seed got mixed up. It comes from the Parker Range south of Coolgardie where a lot of mining is now taking place. It has short rigid green leaves and the flowers are pendent and come out white turning pink. It is a great plant for gardens in dryer areas and should be grown in more gardens.

On the second day we assembled at Kondinin and then went west on the Corrigin – Kondinin road to look at *Hakea kippistiana* growing near salt lakes in sandy loam. This species has thinner and grey-green terete leaves that are not rigid compared to *Hakea preissii* and the flower also is quite different. It has proved adaptable in our gardens.

Before we left the Kondinin area we went into the airfield and looked at plants of *Hakea platysperma* and *francisiana*. The *Hakea platysperma* grow exceptionally well here and set a lot of seed. Generally my thoughts are that plants with large seed capsules use a lot of energy in producing them and hence the number of seed capsules formed is limited to the plants environment. However, here they form a large number of seed capsules. There were also plants of *Hakea francisiana*, which have been introduced through soil movement by vehicles.

On a sandy rise north of Kondinin in the road-rail easement we came across a wonderland of plants including *Hakea erecta*, *cygna ssp cygna*, *meisneriana* and the cream form of *Hakea francisiana*. *Hakea erecta* with its upright pointed green leaves and pink flowers is always a lovely plant, whereas *Hakea cygna ssp. cygna* has lanceolate leaves that are more horizontal and white flowers. *Hakea meisneriana* is a bushy shrub to about 1.8m and has thinner leaves and fruits in clusters. We were to see many more of these species over the next few days.

Further north along the railway easement near South Kuminin we came across a large plant of *Hakea minyma*. The long slender leaves and the shape of the seed capsules made it easy to identify. Also there was a plant of *Hakea multilineata*, again easy to identify by the way its short pink flowers curled around the stem. Both these plants had been introduced to this spot by machinery movements. It was interesting to note that seedlings were appearing and in time there will be quite a few plants unless the road grader decides to do drainage works. We continued on north again along the railway easement to look at a population of *Hakea recurva ssp. recurva*. Again introduced by transport they had taken over a sandy loam area and were about to flower profusely. The afternoon return journey to Kondinin was along back roads where we came across *Hakeas horrida*, *newbeyana*, *subsulcata* and *corymbosa*.

The third day saw us leaving the Kondinin area and heading down to the Lake Grace area visiting reserves and roadsides along the way. I had not travelled this way before so was interested to see what we would find. The first stop was to look at two large plants of *Hakea commutata* on a roadside. Normally I would picture them in depressions but these were on level ground in what the local farmers call crab hole country. The plants were over 2m high and wide and had set a lot of seed. The leaves are short and partially upturned. The seed capsules have a short stalk. Further along the Tarin Rock Road we came across *Hakea newbeyana* which is very similar to *Hakea commutata* but the seed capsule has a keel on the top surface. In the North Tarin Rock reserve we looked at a form of *Hakea ilicifolia*, but the leaves were too long for *ilicifolia* and not pinnate enough for *H horrida*. I have a similar plant in the garden at Elliminyt and Elva Teague has one in her garden at Swan Hill, Victoria. The *obliqua* group are known to hybridize on their margins. Further on in the big Tarin Rock reserve we came across *H pandanicarpa ssp crassifolia*, *strumosa*, *obliqua ssp. parviflora*, *corymbosa*, *brownii*, *cygna ssp.cygna*, *multilineata*, *lehmanniana*, *trifurcata*, *scoparia*, and *incrassata*. We also came across two populations of *Hakea hastata* which had the larger leaf form. In the afternoon we said goodbye to four of our group as they headed off to the Fitzgerald NP and conservation areas north of Coolgardie.

On the last day we looked at roadsides and reserves in the Lake Grace area. We came across *Hakea* species we had seen the previous days except for *Hakea prostrata* and *petiolaris ssp angusta*. *Hakea prostrata* was growing on a roadside south of Lake Grace and had the smaller leaf and lovely reddish flowers. It is very similar to *Hakea pritzelii* which grows on the northern slopes of the Stirling Ranges. *Hakea petiolaris ssp angusta* grows around granite outcrops and is easily

distinguished by the length of its leaf stalk, which is sessile to less than 5mm in length and bigger leaves than *petiolaris* ssp *petiolaris*.

The second part of my visit to WA was a road trip to northern areas with Tom Constant. We hoped to find *Hakea rhombales* north of Meekatharra on the Great Northern Highway but despite extensive searching did not come across it. We did find *Hakea lorea*, which grows across much of northern Australia. Perhaps Joe Stephens who has managed conservation properties can give us a more accurate location to find it as it is a beautiful plant especially in flower. I have two plants here at Elliminyt and have seen it growing quite successfully at Kingaroy in Queensland.

From Meekatharra we back tracked to the Mullewa area where the daisies were in full bloom. However, much of the native shrubbery has been cleared and the only *Hakea* we found was *Hakea bucculenta* in reserves north of Mullewa. It grows in deep yellow sand and was in flower. It explains why it is difficult to grow elsewhere as drainage has to be perfect.

South of Mullewa we drove down Casuarinas Road which had some good roadside flora and found *Hakea pycnoneura*. Its long strappy leaves are a feature of this plant. Further on we turned into Burma Road and the reserve there is as good as you would like to see. Plenty of healthy *Banksia* and *Hakeas* *polyanthema*, *trifurcata* and *incrassata*. *H. polyanthema* is a species seldom grown by *Hakea* members and deserves to be grown in our gardens. It is a low growing plant with fine terete leaves that form a bushy shrub with white flowers and a ovate shaped seed capsule with a stalk not bent. *Hakea brachyptera* from the area south of Lake Grace has similar features but the seed capsule stalk is bent at right angles to the stem.

We then went eastwards looking for *Hakea recurva* ssp. *arida* south of Morawa but had no success in finding it. It should have been in flower as *recurva* ssp. *recurva* was very conspicuous by its bright yellow flowers. Here at Elliminyt I have both subspecies, which put out a lot of new growth each year but are very reluctant to flower. Perhaps it is just too cool.

On the final day we headed across towards the National Parks in the Eneabba area. The Eneabba--Three Springs Road is one of the few roads left with good roadside flora and along the way we stopped to find *H. gilbertii*, more *incrassata*, *brownii* and *flabellifolia*. The National Parks have a great variety of *Hakeas* in them and it is probably better to spend time in them than looking at many of the roadsides.

It was a great fortnight of *Hakea* hunting with wonderful friends. It is a pity to see the roadside flora becoming more denuded. Western Australia has some much unique flora and yet the local and state governments do little to preserve it.

Margaret Pieroni OAM

It is with great pleasure that I congratulate Margaret Pieroni on her OAM award. Margaret has dedicated much of her life to the genus *Dryandra* and her botanical drawings and paintings are of incredible detail. Margaret has a great knowledge of Western Australian flora. I had the pleasure of being on two trips with her out some 300 klms east of Esperance to Cape Arid National Park and Mount Ragged.

Member reports.

Neil Marriott from Stawell has lost some *Hakeas* due to the extreme dry here in southern western Victoria. One of the losses was *Hakea pulvinifera*, which we were trying to propagate using *Hakea drupacea* as the stock.

Finance.

Brought forward	4185-13
Income Subscriptions	15-00
Expenditure.	

Seed bank.

There is plenty of seed in the seed bank, so please consider ordering some to try your efforts at propagating. It is always nice to have some spares to sell or give to friends.

Trials with growing of northern Hakea species.

I have experimented by planting some in the ground with plastic covers around them, others placed in large pots and left up against an eastern facing brick wall and some left in the hot house. The results are as follows.

Hakea pedunculata. The plant in the ground is struggling due to the cold weather. The grafted ones still in Ian Evans' hothouse seem to have taken.

Hakea chordophylla. The four in the hothouse have grown nicely and will be planted out when the weather is warmer.

Hakea persiehana from the Atherton Tablelands. This one does appear to very cold sensitive. Of the four in large pots up against the eastern facing brick wall, two have survived. Of the three in the ground only one remains. There has been mixed success with grafting and there is still one in my hothouse.

Central Australian Hakeas. The two plants of *Hakea divaricata* have survived and also one of the two *Hakea macrocarpa*. It does get very cold at night in the Center in winter so more hardy but here still lack the heat in summer which they like.

Hakea bucculenta.

Many members have trouble growing this species to flowering stage. When looking at it in the wild north of Mullewa in Western Australia it was growing in deep yellow sand. The drainage would have been excellent and there would be moisture at depth. Its roots do not have deep penetrating strength in heavier soils and hence it dies from lack of moisture and surface heat. If you want to grow this species then create a garden bed of deep sand at least 1.5m deep or try a grafted plant.

Our garden.

In early September we had a week of extreme wind, which on one day was over 100 klm per hour. Most Hakeas stood up to it but I did have a few losses. *Hakea petiolaris* ssp *angusta* which I mentioned earlier was sheared off at the ground and the cause of death was then obvious, rotting at the base. The older of the two *Hakea chromatropa* was also sheared off near the base but there were a couple of lower limbs still left which I will trim up, hopefully to keep the plant going. A *Hakea drupacea* on the western fence line was blown out and I have had to prune one of the *Hakea archaeoides* which was leaning over at 45 degrees. I have picked a large quantity of seed from these bushes.

The spring flowering is now getting towards its best. Hakeas *nitida*, *varia*, *ridiga*, *erecta*, *ochroptera*, and *ilicifolia* are very noticeable by the large quantity of flowers displayed. *Hakea loranthifolia* is flowering for the first time and is an attractive medium sized plant with white flowers. It comes from the York area in Western Australia and unfortunately is not often grown by members. Another one that has proved difficult to germinate from Tasmania and parts of Victorian high country, *Hakea lissosperma* finally has a few flowers on it. The second plant of *Hakea fraseri* has quite a few flowers across its top canopy. Let's hope it sets seed as it is a rare plant.

Happy gardening, cheers, Paul.



Hakea hybrid between ilicifolia and horrida



Hakea scoparia ssp trycherica



Hakea ochroptera



Hakea varia