

Hello Everyone,

There was no newsletter issued in 1987 because I understood that the revision of the *Hakea* genus was to be completed by the middle of the year and I waited for the results. My information has subsequently been confirmed as incorrect. In the meantime I contracted a prolonged viral illness and followed it up with a car accident at the end of October. At last I seem back to normal!

When Don McGillivray was unable to undertake the revision of *Hakea* due to illness, three botanists in Adelaide, Dr. Bill Barker and his wife Robyn and Dr. Laurie Haegi, offered to take over. In the past none of them had concentrated on *Hakea* to any extent but they had intended to look into the group one day. The revision has to be fitted in with their other commitments, some of which have a much higher priority. For example, in 1987, Laurie as Horticultural Botanist at the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide, has been responsible for commissioning a computer to handle their living plant records and designing the new computerised record system, together with supervising a census of plants growing in the Adelaide Botanic Garden.

In spite of other commitments, the three botanists have already written up over 90 of the estimated 150 species, a few are new ones. To give an idea of the size of the task, they have a total of over 16,000 herbarium specimens of *Hakea* in Adelaide, borrowed from other Australian institutions and many overseas herbaria, including the collections of Kew, the British Museum and so on. Handling such numbers of specimens and attending to the associated book-keeping is a formidable task in itself, yet it is impossible to do the job properly and thoroughly without the specimens. The account in the first instance will be published in the *Flora of Australia*, probably sometime in 1989, possibly in the same volume as *Grevillea* and there may be a brief prior account in a scientific journal, but this is all some time off.

Dr. Haegi has become a member of our study group and I am glad to welcome him and other new members. Laurie has sent me information about two new species described by Dr. Byron Lamont as a result of his work on the *H. falcata* group in W.A. This information was published towards the end of 1987.

Hakea erecta Lamont: a species in cultivation among enthusiasts, with distinctive pale pink small flowers and leaves similar to those of broad-leaved forms of *H. ulicina*. It has generally gone under the name of *H. falcata* in error.

Hakea cygna Lamont: another W.A. species sometimes confused with *H. falcata*, not as commonly grown as *H. erecta*, with cream flowers (small), thick featureless flat leaves somewhat similar to those of *H. incrassata*, and with medium sized fruits. The seeds are very distinctive, with a pale wing with dark streaks in it all around the seed body. Subspecies *cygna* is the flat-leaved form while a rare needle-leaved form has been named subspecies *needlei*.

Hakea aenigma W.R. Barker & Haegi was described in 1985 as part of the *H. ulicina* Complex in South Australia comprising *H. aenigma*, *H. repullans*, *H. carinata* and *H. muelleriana*. *H. aenigma* is a Kangaroo Island endemic, most closely related to *H. repullulans*. This new species is unusual in its sterility, apparent genetic uniformity and complete dependence on suckering as a means of reproduction.

Before the Ash Wednesday bushfires I had seen *H. cygna* in Ken Stuckey's garden in S.A. Ken's comment was that it was an interesting plant but he felt that there were much showier hakeas for use in gardens.

In Melbourne we are experiencing a very long hot spell without rain and suddenly two of my favourite species have died. I had a *H. myrtoides* with dusty pink flowers growing in a bed with sand added to my usual heavy clay loam, and this died although another in a nearby bed survived. I was much more disappointed to lose a really magnificent specimen of *H. smilacifolia* which had been near a clump of *anigozanthus*. I have seen many of this species in the wild but found under garden conditions it became a very superior plant with grey furry curved leaves and bronze new growth most of the year. All through the garden plants have been under obvious stress but the hakeas always have held on till now. The largest one is a grafted *H. coriacea* which I planted in a raised bed and now cannot reach up to pick the flowers! It stayed in flower for three months and already the buds are swollen for the coming season.

It is common for hakeas not to fruit under garden conditions and I have some needle-leaved

species I cannot identify for this reason, but more irritating are the strong, vigorous plants that simply will not flower. For years *H. ambigua* and *H. hookerana* were in this category but in January I found some skimpy red flowers on the *H. hookerana* and these persisted well into February. However, as my books say that this species flowers in September/October, I now wonder if the plant was correctly labelled.

Hakea linearis always starts to flower just before Xmas and continues through January into February when later in the month the scented flowers of *H. clavata* appear. Many hakeas have a light scent, slightly reminiscent of honey: *sericea*, *eriantha*, *erinacea*, *nodosa*, *clavata*, *suaveolens*, *scoparia*, *circumalata*, *trifurcata* and *varia*. It is true though that some plants produce a most unpleasant odour, *H. nodosa* can do this sometimes and is called "old goat" with good reason but the greatest contrast I have come across is *H. trifurcata* with an overwhelmingly sweet perfume in the Eneabba (W.A.) area but in the south-west of the state often deserves its nick-name of Little Lavatory Bush. Big Lavatory Bush is *Hakea rubriflora*, a most attractive tall shrub BUT it should never be grown close to living areas - never!

Many hakeas can be grown in tubs, all the small species and bigger ones such as *H. baxteri* have been successful. About ten years ago I was given a *H. multilineata* just after buying one, and not having space for two at that time, put it in a larger pot for the time being. The hakea kept growing and I kept putting it into bigger containers until it was getting up to 2.5m tall. It was slender in shape but flowered each year, even when severely root-bound. This year I found a place in the garden for it and it is handling the dry conditions quite well. Another project I am trying is to espalier a *H. cucullata* against a bare fence opposite my kitchen window. There is plenty of space to grow it naturally but I use that area for taking deliveries of sand, sawdust etc. and want something to block out the neighbours and the fence as well. So far the *cucullata* is up to the height of the fence with four branches growing horizontally and two more about to be tied back. Maybe it would not be so tractable in good rain conditions, but so far so good.

For those of you that have soils that are wet in winter and dry out in summer, I have had the following species recommended: *Macraeana*, *nodosa*, *petiolaris*, *salicifolia*, and *sericea*.

For soils that are always wet but not actually saturated, I have been told that the following are useful: *nodosa*, *salicifolia*, *sericea*, *bakerana*. With *bakerana*, I would imagine the soil would need to be fairly light as it comes from the Sydney sandstone area. In W.A. I saw *H. sulcata* and *lehmanniana* both growing in area of continual dampness in winter but I think that those areas would dry out in summer.

SEED BANK

I have made up a new list of seed available and would ask you to keep this list as a guide for the future. I shall give one to each new member but will not be sending out a new list each year. No doubt you will find well known species missing, this is usually because I cannot find suppliers. The seed bank is used by members continually so I often run out of a particular species but keep buying regularly.

Since Peter and Hazel Althofer have left Burrendong, I do not expect to be able to get seed from that source. Over the years they were most generous in information and help in every way, I hope they find a new interest in their retirement among their favourite plants.

If members have spare seed collected from their own plants, I would be particularly pleased to receive it. I have good supplies of the very large species, but would welcome seed from the small and up to 3m. species.

IDENTIFICATION OF SPECIES

Several years ago, a friend sent me a slide of a striking hakea he had seen in W.A. north of Perth, the actual area was rather vague. I could never track it down and Tom and I tried to find it without success in 1981. For the past two years I have been studying Italian, and recently was going through some old letters from the W.A. Herbarium, one in answer to a query I had made about *H. tamminensis* had given me a description of that species in Latin only, and suddenly I could read it with the help of my Italian dictionary! I am not certain but there is a good chance that the slide is of this rare species, but we still do not know where it was photographed.

BILL CANE I cannot close without reference to the passing of this great friend of S.G.A.P. and all growers of Australian plants. It was an honour and a pleasure to have known him.