

## AUSTRALIAN NATIVE PLANTS SOCIETY AUSTRALIA

HAKEA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER No.44

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Dear members.

I start this newsletter as the heavens open up again and our soggy clay depressions are now over flowering with water. October is only half over and already some 120mm of rain has fallen. The native plants are loving the wet year and the Hakeas have been flowering profusely. The downside has been the increase in weeding and the motor mower has had much more work to do as the native grasses have just shot up and put out seed heads so quickly.

Since the last newsletter we have travelled extensively, taking advantage of the wet year to travel into outback Queensland, the coastal areas of East Gippsland and south east NSW, the southern part of Western Australia and back up to Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour. Whilst some of the time was spent visiting relatives or attending to APS activities I did have the pleasure of visiting many Hakea locations both in the wild and in gardens. So my first endeavour is to say something about what Hakeas I came across and where so that if you happen to be in these areas you may also have the pleasure of looking at them.

The outback tour to South west Queensland. We headed off in July thinking that the big wet earlier in the year would have produced a fantastic array of wild flowers. However when we arrived in Queensland it became obvious that the rain had not disappeared and regular falls had continued and station tracks were just too wet to travel on. The weather too had stayed much cooler and the wild flowers whilst budding up were waiting for warmer weather to flower. It was not until the beginning of October that this happened and by then we were long gone. I noticed the rains have continued and if they have another big wet over summer the rivers such as Coopers Creek will fill Lake Eyre to the brim. I had intended to look at four Hakea species in the Quilpie- Barcaldine area. The first Hakea ivoryi was easily found on the Yewoh Opal mine Road about 13 klms in from the junction with the Quilpie – Windorah road. There were four ancient large trees with deep fissured corky bark which had flowered back in the previous November. The seed had long matured and opened but the compound leaves arrangement combined with entire single leaves left no doubt to its identity. Stretching from Bourke to Windorah it is often hard to locate because of its sparseness.

The second Hakea was just on the northern out skirts of Windorah. Hakea chordophylla grows in sandy soils overlying heavier alkaline clays and is very similar to ivoryi but instead of masses of compound leaves it has long down curved leaves. It too had flowered earlier, probably in March during the wet season and so most of the seed capsules had opened up and gone. Windorah on the banks of Coopers Creek is a small hamlet with good

accommodation and a solar power plant which supplies the surrounding district. As we passed through, Coopers Creek was still flowing and house boats were still on the water. In flood it would be awesome to see.

Further north towards Barcaldine *Hakea leucoptera* ssp. *sericipes* is found growing along the roadsides and has terete silvery foliage and masses of lime green flowers. It is a shrub to 2m.

The fourth *Hakea* just eluded me. Not being able to go down station tracks did not help. *Hakea collina* grows on the Grey Range in rocky break away soils that practically support nothing else. I probably should have spent more time walking on the Grey Range where the Quilpie – Windorah road crosses it at about 50 klms. from Quilpie. At home it flowered profusely in May but the cold weather meant the seed capsules after starting to form fell off. It flowered again in early October, so we may be lucky this time.

The East Gippsland *Hakea* crawl.

After the Fred Rogers seminar at Bairnsdale three couples, John and Barbara Nevin, Mike and Cathy Beamish and Paul and Barbara Kennedy headed off towards the Victorian /NSW boarder and Ben Boyd National Park. Along the way near Cann River we came across lovely pink flowering forms of *Hakea decurrens* ssp *physocarpa*. After we crossed the boarder we entered Ben Boyd National Park and went looking for *Hakea decurrens* ssp. *platytaenia*. We found two forms of it. One a taller plant back in the forest and the other a prostrate form with thicker and shorter terete leaves on the wind swept heaths down near the light house. The widths of the red and pale white wood zones in the opened capsules help us to identify this ssp. Also in the Park were *Hakeas teretifolia* ssp *hirsuta*, *ulicina*, *laevipes* ssp *laevipes* and *microcarpa*. We came across all of them except the last one. On the way out we stopped for lunch at one of those majestic viewing points over looking the ocean which rivalled the views you see at Wine Glass Bay in Tasmania.

In the afternoon we travelled north through Merimbula to look at the magnificent *Hakea* collection of Cliff and Sayaka Wallis on a large tract of land of sandy loam facing an inlet on the north side and a large swamp on the west side. The garden is quite protected from sea winds and frosts are very light. There are over 130 species of *Hakea* here and most were looking happy except for *Hakea obtusa* which appeared not to like the conditions. Cliff has to build 1.2m chain mesh wire fences around his garden beds as the kangaroos graze his open paddocks and would eat and knock over his *Hakeas* if they were not protected. The initial plantings were started about four years ago and some such as *Hakea francisiana* are now quite large plants and flowering well. The climate is ideal for growing *Hakeas* from all over Australia although perhaps a bit cool for the northern species. Cliff puts down about 100mm of mulch around his plants and I expect he will not have to repeat this process as *Hakeas* put down their own mulch as they mature. I was fascinated by the labelling system, flat rounded river stones, painted green with black lettering. As the plants became larger you just moved them further out from the plant. As this garden matures it will be a great place to visit and a further buffer for those rare *Hakeas* in the wild.

The next morning Barbara and I on our way up to Canberra called in on Graeme and Denise Krake at Brogo who also have about 130 species of *Hakea* growing. They are just north of Bega nestled in a beautiful mountain valley on deep granitic soils. You may remember that 0.5m of rain fell here in a couple of days back in February and I expected there would be losses due to wet feet. Well the *Hakeas* are planted on a 1 in 12 slope and the majority of water just ran passed them, so they all survived and are growing on nicely. The climate is probably a little bit warmer and again frosts are nearly non existent. The outlook from the

garden across the creek onto the wooded range is very tranquil. Again we are lucky to have people interested in growing the entire genera of Hakeas and the garden which is only two years old will be a great place to visit in future years.

The Western Australian trip.

My aim was to revisit the Hakeas of the Albany region and to catch up on some members who were growing Hakeas in the southern part of WA. In all it was a very successful trip and enabled me to further my knowledge of Hakeas.

We joined Margaret Pieroni on excursions into Mount Manypeaks National Park where there is a host of wonderful flora. Along the Denmark – Albany Road we came across *Hakea gilbertii* in flower and *Hakea brachyptera* which was much further west than I expected to find it. Down Cheyne Road we found *Hakea tuberculata*, *cucullata*, *ferruginea*, *lissocarpha*, *trifurcata*, *lasiantha* and by the sea *Hakea drupacea* and *laurina*.

The trip out to the Stirling Ranges occurred on a lovely sunny day. *Hakea marginata* and *prostrata* were found along Woodgenullup North Road together with some very rare *Dryandras*. The drive through the Stirlings is filled with lovely scenery and ever changing flora. *Hakea lehmanniana* grows as a low shrub on stony hillsides, *Hakea ambigua* with its white to pinky white flowers was easily distinguishable (*Hakea falcata* grows in bushland further to the west and has narrower leaves than *ambigua*) and *Hakea pandanicarpa* grows around one of the lookouts with *Hakea cucullata*. Along Salt River Road *Hakea varia*, *denticulata* and *pritzillii* were found. The day finished off with a visit to a winter wet depression along the Albany – Stirlings Road where three remaining plants of *Hakea lasiocarpa* grow. Fortunately they were in flower and the large white flowers are the largest in the *varia* group of Hakeas.

We also had a look around Margarets property where *Hakea florida* grows.

Over the following two days we visited Kevin Collins Banksia farm at Mount Barker where Kevin is adding to his Banksia collection with the addition of the *Dryandra* and *Hakea* collection. At present there are only 30 species of *Hakea* but seed is being forwarded to Kevin to build up the genera. He has grey sandy loam over lateritic bands.

The other place visited was the bush block of Bev Lockley east of Katanning. Bev along with her sister bought 160 acres of denuded salt affected land and has planted 53000 trees which has lowered the water table and allowed her to drain off the salt crust, thus restoring it to productive land. In one area Bev has begun planting Hakeas in soil that has a perhaps 50mm of sandy material over cracking grey clays. I had thought the salt coming up would have made the soil alkaline but it actually comes to the surface leaving the soil below acid. Some years ago *Hakea preissii* came up and she then planted *Hakea nitida* and *olivacea* plus a couple of others I have forgotten their names nearby. All have grown quite well except *olivacea* which is looking unhealthy from lack of water. In recent plantings Bev has added at least another 25 species including *petiolaris*, and *invaginata*. What fascinates me is the tough way she treats her plants, they are watered in the trays, put in the ground and left to survive!! This year the rainfall has been about 200mm and so the whole of the WA wheat belt is in drought. Bev has since written to me to say she has had to start watering the small Hakeas as the drought and hot days were putting them under considerable stress.

Near Bev is one of the few populations of *Hakea hastata*. I countered about 20 plants in all in a disused gravel quarry which could be opened up again in the future. There is no effort to protect this population of a *Hakea* which is gazetted as rare.

Lastly I had the pleasure of speaking to the Coffs Harbour group of APS. They have a sub tropical to warm temperate climate where especially the northern species of *Hakea* should

grow well. I noted there are ten species of *Hakea* that occur within this region and hope they make a special endeavour to grow them all.

#### Letters from members.

Phil Trickett and Cantriona Bates have shifted from Canberra down to a warmer location at Milton near Ulladulla on the coast. They have six hectares of lovely loam and they are excited about putting in a great collection of *Hakeas* plus many other native species. Phil is an expert at grafting, so what does not grow on its own roots will be grafted in order to ensure its survival.

Una Gaff from Gilgandra wrote to say she had seen *Hakea collina* in flower on Beal Bluff, north of Cunnamulla. She also sent photos of *Hakea lorea* ssp *lorea* in flower near Boulia and further north of Camooweal. Her *Hakea eyreanas* are starting to flower in October, which is later than I expected, but then this has not been a normal year.

Jennifer Young has found a red flowering form of *Hakea preissii* out near Southern Cross in WA. The lime green flowered forms also are flowering with it, so it will be interesting to see if the seed from the red flowering plant come true to colour. Any comments on the above would be appreciated.

#### Welcome to new members.

A warm welcome to Una Gaff (Gilgandra), Annette and John Houseman (Wauhope), James Martin (Kootingal), Tony Crawford (Tinderbox, Tas.)

#### Financial statement.

Balance forward 1 st. July 2010	1819 - 14
Income from subscriptions	645 - 00

#### Expenditure.

Printing and postage of newsletter No. 43	86 - 25
Replacement ink cartridge	21 - 60
Balance as of 1st. November 2010	2356 - 29

I thank all the members who have sent in their subscriptions where advised as due.

#### Seed bank.

I have small quantities of seed of *laevipes* ssp *laevipes*, *laevipes* ssp *graniticola*, *anadenia*, *obliqua*, *decurrens* ssp *platytaena*, *lehmanniana*, *cerataphylla*, *oldfieldii*, *teretifolia* NSW form, *ulicina*, *archaeoides*, *smilacifolia*, *circumulata*, *pritzelii*, *denticulata*, *erinacea*, *clavata*, *plurinervia*, *newbeyana*, *florulenta*, *prostrata*, *rhombales*, *linearis*, *corymbosa*, *elliptica*, *cucullata*, *sulcata*, *tuberculata*, *hastata*, *brachyptera*, and *ambigua*.

#### Hakeas in the garden.

As mentioned earlier the wet year has had many benefits. *Hakea lorea* ssp. *Lorea* from South east Queensland and Central Australia started flowering in May and have continued right through to October. What is surprising is that they are putting out new flower buds again as the older flowers are starting to form seed. They obviously react to good rains. The grass leaf group of *bucculenta*, *francisiana*, *multilineata* and *grammataphylla* have flowered exceptionally well. Others such as *purpurea*, *orthorrhyncha*, *ochroptera*,

rigida, erecta, and cygna have made up for the drought years with a mass of flowers all over the shrub. Even Hakea recurva has finally decided to flower after being planted some nine years ago. For Hakea preissii the difference between a drought year and a wet one made no difference, it just flowered away. Hakea scoparia and pycnoneura and its hybrids from Mount Ragged flowered at least three times during the winter spring season. I am now hoping for plenty of seed to be produced.

This time I was not going to let the new growth be eaten by the Grevillea looper caterpillar. I sprayed Dipel on over 100 plants and only found about three caterpillars during the operation. So perhaps the wetter season has reduced their numbers.

Last weekend on my way home from the APS Victoria quarterly meeting in Hamilton I visited the garden of Brendon Stahl at Deans Marsh. With a rainfall of about 900mm the Hakeas from southern WA grow very well in this cool temperate climate. Brendon had olivacea, pandanicarpa, denticulata, corymbosa, petiolaris, cucullata, ruscifolia and others, all very healthy plants and setting seed.

Royce Raleigh's photos.

This issue concludes the last of many photos of Hakeas that Royce has sent me. I thank him for his efforts and hope his garden too is recovering from those many years of drought. The photos left to right are, top, marginata and platysperma, centre, recurva and scoparia, bottom, spathulata and victoria.

New information on Hakea chromatropa.

Whilst at Kevin Collins place at Mount Barker I had the pleasure at looking at Hakea chromatropa in flower. The leaves are far as I could ascertain are identical to Hakea ilicifolia but the flowers are a pinky red. It is a striking plant in flower but terribly prickly. I hope it sets seed but if it dose not then being in the varia group it will strike readily from cuttings.

It has been a busy year, and how fast it has gone. I hope the moisture continues over the summer as there is so much work awaiting me that I could be doing for the Society.

Spreading the good news about our fabulous and unique flora is something we can all do amongst the people we come in contact with.

The regular falls of rain have continued into November but now we await the grass hopper plague. I hope they get sucked up into an up draft and blown out to sea. The last thing we want now is for the new growth to be disseminated by these creatures.

I thank Hans Greisser for his assistance in e mailing out these newsletters.

I wish you all a very happy and holy Christmas and may your Hakea collections continue to thrive and bring you great pleasure.

Regards, Paul.



