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AUSTRALIAN NATIVE PLANTS SOCIETY AUSTRALIA

HAKEA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 46

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Dear members.

Winter has arrived with cold mornings and lovely sunny days. It is also the time when many Hakeas come into flower. After 300mm of rain in the first three months of the year, the autumn season was relatively dry, however by then the sub soil was still moist and the Hakeas continued to thrive.

Pruning, weeding and mowing of grassed areas have kept us busy in between all the other activities of family and APS. Pruning in particular has become an urgent task as many Hakeas have put on so much growth that branches are starting to lean and in some cases snap. Frequent pruning is much better than having to take off big branches. Cliff Wallis from Merimbula has lost Hakeas linearis and nitida after heavy pruning and my son in Coffs Harbour has also lost Hakea octoptera after taking off a large limb. I remember back in our days in Melbourne cutting a 100mm diameter limb off a Hakea victoria and then seeing it die suddenly.

Hakeas in flower.

Hakea cycloptera is usually the first to flower in autumn and signals the beginning of another season of colour that continues right through to the spring. It is followed by ruscifolia, kippistana, petiolaris, tuberculata, bicornata, laurina, scoparia ssp trychica and Burrendong beauty. The Hakeas scoparia ssp trychica, pycnoneura and the hybrid forms from these two from Mount Ragged are probably the outstanding long flowering Hakeas. They flower on and off from the autumn through to late spring and especially after a good fall of rain. The masses of globular purple/cream flowers against a dark green leaf make them very showy. They tend to form a nice oval shaped plant that is easy to maintain and are drought and frost hardy.

Soon Hakea orthorrhyncha with its red flowers along its branches and Hakea stenophylla from Shark Bay with its masses of cream flowers will be out.

The Hakea loreas from Central Australia are also putting out flower spikes and new growth, so I am expecting a long season of flowering from them.

New members.

We welcome two new members from the Colac region in Victoria and hope their efforts in growing Hakeas will be an enjoyable experience. Tony Hughes comes from Winchelsea and works in horticulture education and Lorraine Fletcher is from near Forrest in the Otway Ranges.

Letters from members.

Cliff Wallis has sent me a report on the progress of his 130 species of Hakea he has growing. I am trying to analyse why some have not done well in his grey white

sands near the sea. A number have died suddenly and I have not been able to give a reason for it. Some causes could be poor root formation, fungal attack or high water table. Perhaps the week of hot humid weather may also had in summer may have caused them to die. When digging out the roots of a dead plant it is wise to look at the root structure to see what may have been the cause. Even through all those years of drought and then the soaking rains, I have only lost one *Hakea* due to this change in climatic conditions. I also lost a couple of *Hakeas* on that terrible hot day back in 2009. So I am not sure what is causing Cliff's problem.

I had a visit from Pat Lahar from Armidale in April. It was great to be able to walk around the garden with him and talk about *Hakeas*.

Royce Raleigh has been remodelling his garden and as well as replanting he has spread 75 tonnes of scoria over the garden. (No wonder he is fit). He says that the scoria is a very good mulch in that it lets the water through, keeps the sub soil moist and restricts the growth of weeds. However I expect there will be a lot of germination of native plants in such a situation. The good summer rains have made an enormous difference to the new growth of plants. Some of the *Hakeas* there are 30 years old. Kevin Collins from Mount Barker in Western Australia says that rains have finally come after a very dry summer. The red flowered form of *Hakea ilicifolia* is about to flower again. It did not set seed in 2010.

I had the pleasure to talk to the Colac/Otway group in April and stayed with Brendon and Maureen Stahl at Deans Marsh. Brendon showed me some of his *Hakea* species which are growing in a sandy soil with a 1000mm rainfall. Species from wetter climates such as *olifolia*, *denticulata*, *salicifolia* and *drupacea* grow very well there. However he has some of the dryer species in *francisiana*, *pandanicarpa* and *corymbosa* also growing well. Brendon also has a variegated form of *Hakea salicifolia*, and I must do something about getting that propagated from cuttings. It does set seed, but I doubt it would produce the variegated foliage.

Max Ewer has sent me a photo of *Hakea ilicifolia* in flower. The flowers are so dense that you can hardly see a leaf.

Phil Trickett from Milton near Ulladulla in NSW writes to say his grafted *Hakeas* are growing well. Phil is a master at grafting and so far has planted out the following species on *Hakea salicifolia* rootstock, *aculeata*, *bucculenta*, *francisianna*, *pandanicarpa* ssp. *crassifolia*, *drupacea*, *verrucosa*, *spathulata*, *cycloptera*, *cristata*, *laurina/petiolearis*, *multilineata*, *neurophylla*, *grammatophylla*, *florida*, *megalosperma* and *victoria* on *dactyloides* rootstock as *salicifolia* does not take. *Hakea salicifolia* grows very well in the Milton area on the deep friable soils. The 300mm of rain in March did not affect the plants in respect to being water logged.

I visited the garden of Barbara Buchanan in mid June. Barbara lives back in the mountains to the west of Benalla in Victoria where the days are cooler and the rainfall over 1200mm. As one would expect the *Hakeas* from the wetter areas such as the area around Albany in WA grow quite well in the deep mountain soils. However some of the dryer climate species such as *grammatophylla*, *newbeyana*, *pandanicarpa* and *pendens* had grown into healthy bushes, flowered and set seed. Perhaps it says something about the ability of many *Hakeas* to adapt to various climates.

Hakea obliqua Group.

In the last newsletter we had a look at the two forms of *Hakea obliqua*. In this newsletter two more species under the six species listed in the oblique group will be discussed. As both are difficult to photograph to produce something looking

interesting in detail, I will again revert to Geoff Cooke's drawings to show the seed and leaf.

Hakea polyanthema is a low shrub found in a few places in the Geraldton – Eneabba area of Western Australia. It is recognised as rare and needs to be grown more widely in our gardens. It grows in loamy soils and is hardy to frosts and drought once established. The climate is hot and dry in summer.

It is a very dense shrub with branches appearing to have a zig zag arrangement between leaf nodes. The terete leaves are 2.5 to 5.5cm long and about 1mm in diameter with an erect mucro. The flowers are very small and pinkish brown in colour. The seed capsule is ovate in shape with a rugose exterior and held erect, 2.5 to 3.5cm long by 1.5 to 1.9cm wide. Seed is about 25mm long, occupying almost the whole of the valve. A wing encircles the seed body which when it opens splits down both sides..

I have two plants growing here at Strathmerton on deep sand. One has flowered and set seed. The leaves are so intertwined and prickly that it is difficult to find the seed down inside the plant, however for small birds it is a wonderful plant for nesting and protection. Max Ewer at Lucindale in South Australia has also grown this species successfully.

Hakea brachyptera.

This plant is very similar to *polyanthema*, however it has a totally different distribution in that it occurs along the southern coast of Western Australia from Hopetoun to near Denmark and inland to Lake Magenta and the foot of the Stirling Ranges. The leaf can be from 3.0 to 9.5cm long. This species is even more dense than *polyanthema* and the seed is usually found on the branches in touch with the ground as it appears it is pollinated by insects or small mammals. The easiest way to look for seed is to lift up the branches in touch with the ground with a pair of gloves on your hands. The distinguishing features from *polyanthema* are that its seed capsule is at right angles to the stalk and that when it opens one side of the seed capsule remains joined. It also has smaller flowers.

Hakea brachyptera grows very well at Strathmerton on deep sand, however it has not set seed which probably is due to the lack of the right pollinator.

Hakea propagators.

With Max Ewer no longer propagating large numbers of *Hakeas*, I have been thinking of how to overcome this problem of being able to supply members with plants. Some are happy to grow their own, but for many of us time does not permit us to dabble in this hobby. The initial plan is to have a number of nurserymen involved in growing as many species as possible for members to purchase and then to progress from there. In Victoria the Melton – Bacchus Marsh Group have just had their plant sale day and sold about 30 species of *Hakea*. In NSW James Martin from near Tamworth has volunteered to grow *Hakeas*. In SA I am hoping Williamstown Nursery near Gawler will grow *Hakeas* for sale for members and sell the excess at the APS SA Adelaide plant sales. I also have a person in mind to do grafting of the difficult to grow *Hakeas* and those that do not set seed.

Propagation of rare or endangered *Hakeas*.

I am pleased to report that the newly described *Hakea* from the alpine region in Victoria, *Hakea asperma* has been successfully propagated and will be trialled in members gardens before being made more readily available.

Financial.	
Balance forward	\$2305-89
Income	
Membership dues	5-00
Expences.	
Hakea newsletter No.45 printing/ postage	60-00
Balance as of 30 th .June 2011	\$2250-89

Hakea obtusa suckering.

I noticed recently that Hakea obtusa had started to sucker under the large plant that has been here for about ten years. I have always weeded around its base using the hoe and at times caught one or more of the surface roots. This year a number of new seedlings have appeared which I am quite sure have come from where I damaged the surface roots. If I carefully dug down and cut the surface root I would be able to pot on these seedlings and hence have plants to give away.

Hakea sericea, pink flowering forms.

I have received a query from the Australian Botanic Gardens, Canberra about whether there is a pink flowering form of Hakea sericea. Apparently botanical descriptions of Hakea sericea describe it as having pink buds with flowers turning to white at maturity. The Hakea sericea plants at Angelsea in Victoria were a lovely pink colour, however it was decided that these were introduced from NSW. All the Hakea sericea specimens I have seen in the wild in coastal NSW have been white flowering. There is a pink form of Hakea decurrens ssp. physocarpa along the Princes Highway between Bemm River and the NSW boarder in Victoria, but elsewhere in the wild white tends to predominate in plants that I have seen. The pink form is the one members like to grow. I would like some comments from members on what they have observed in the wild in the colour forms of both Hakea sericea and decurrens.

Membership fees. These will remain as previously. I will send out a renewal notice to those whose membership fees are due for 2011/2012 with this newsletter or by e mail.

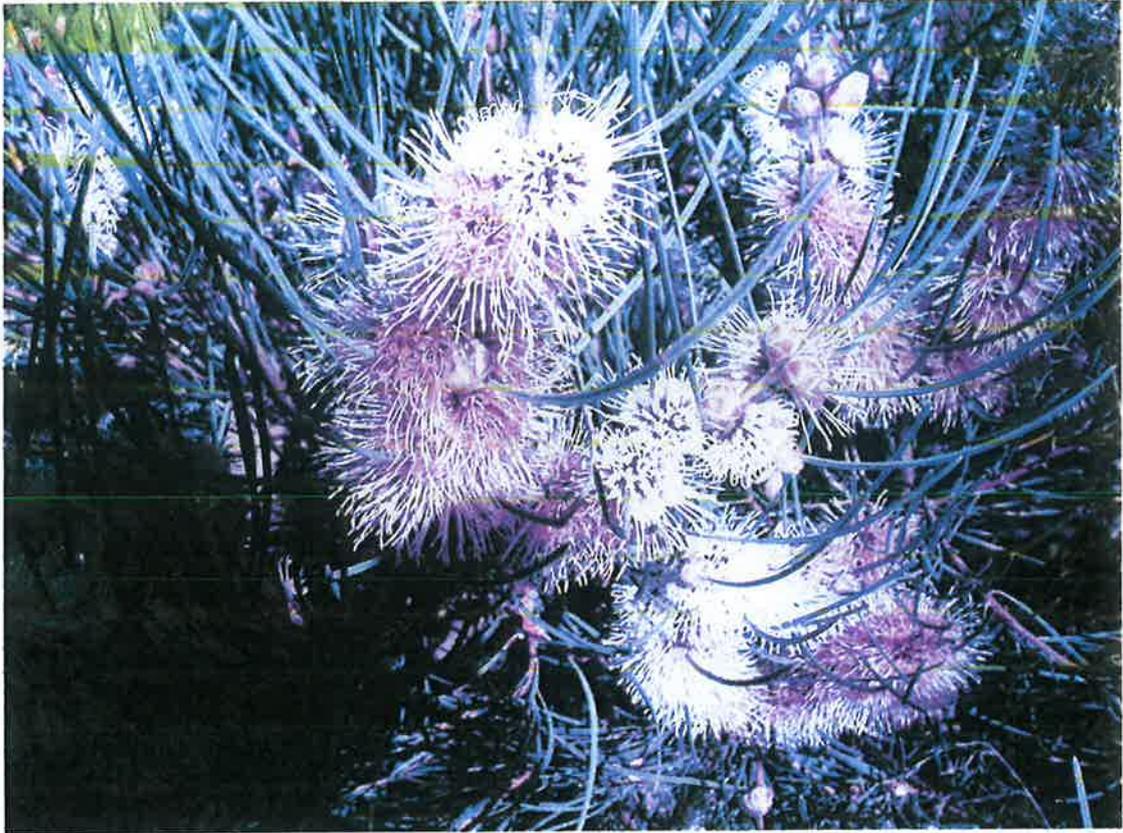
Another good fall of rain has occurred and more of the Hakeas have come out into flower. I have noticed in places tracks about 50mm wide between plants and the grass worn down to bare earth. They are probably made by bush rats which tend to burrow under plants. I will have to watch as if they become too energetic in their diggings some will have to be relocated to the far end of the garden.

We had a week of very cold mornings, down to 1 degree C most mornings, however the northern tropical Hakeas seemed to be OK with plastic wrapped around them. The rabbits have multiplied. One hundred and forty were shot or caught by ferrets in the past month, but their numbers seem to be as plentiful as ever. I block up burrows by putting cuttings of prickly Hakeas down the openings. Rabbits do not like digging in this environment. The mice have also arrived. So far not in plague proportions, but who knows what will happen in the spring when the days get warmer.

In the mean time enjoy garden with your Hakeas,

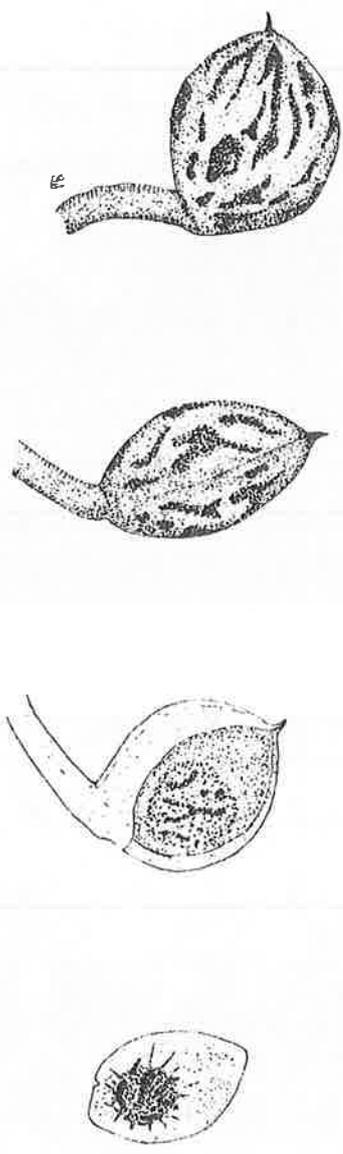
Regards, Paul.

Paul

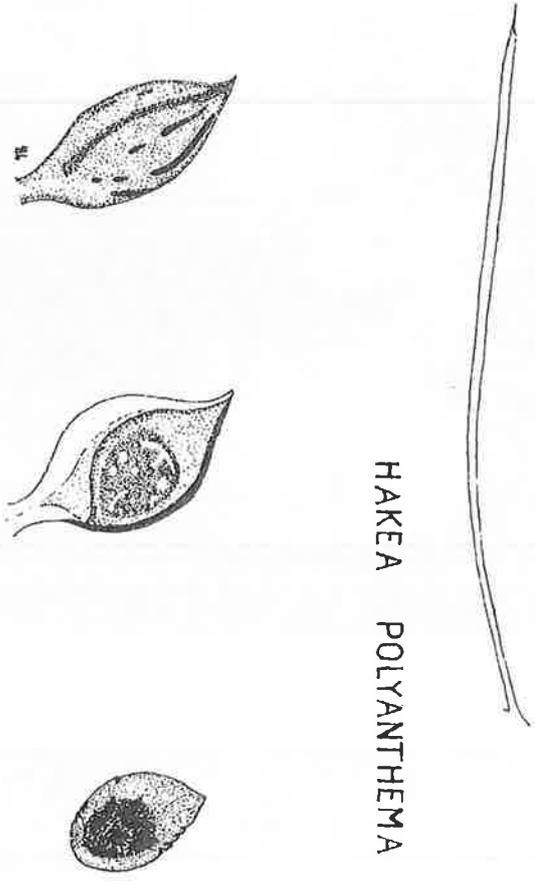


Hakea scoparia ssp. *trycherica*

HAKEA BRACHYPTERA



HAKEA POLYANTHEMA



ANPSA HAKEA STUDY GROUP

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Financial Year 1 / 7 / 2011 to 30 / 6 / 2012

Surname..... Given name.....

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.....Post code.....

E – mail.....

To which Region do you belong?.....

Annual membership fee. If you wish to receive newsletter by mail \$10.00

If you wish to receive newsletter by e mail \$5.00

You may pay up to three years subscriptions in advance.

Enclosed is a cheque/cash for \$..... being membership subscription for 2011/.....

Please make cheques payable to Hakea Study Group and return with this renewal form to:

Paul Kennedy
PO Box 220
Strathmerton, 3641

Thankyou for continuing your membership. A receipt will be posted out with the newsletter or acknowledge by e mail.

I will endeavour to continue including coloured photos of Hakea in the newsletter as they give a better interpretation of what the Hakea looks like in leaf and flower form.

