

AUSTRALIAN NATIVE PLANTS SOCIETY AUSTRALIA

HAKEA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER NO. 50

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Dear members.

We have reached a milestone in that this is newsletter No.50. The Study group began away back in 1990, but has not always been as active as it is today. Nevertheless I thank all those who have contributed to it over this time.

As always when you come back from a great holiday it is difficult to get activated as the memories of what you did keep floating back. I will say more about the trip to Western Australia later, but here on the home front we are entering a very dry spell as the Spring rains have not eventuated. It is not a good sign for summer which is normally our hot dry season. However in my travels the same situation seems to be appearing right across the bottom of Australia where wheat and canola crops are drying off because of lack of moisture.

The exceptional heavy rains in autumn left plenty of moisture in the sub soil so the Hakeas here at Strathmerton have flowered very well. I am hoping that plants will set a lot of seed, but the very cold winter we have had may have burnt off the seed that was forming on the Hakeas that flowered earlier, especially if they come from a warmer climate.

The Katanning Hakea weekend.

Some of the participants have e mailed me saying it was a fabulous weekend. The weather could not have been better with lovely still sunny days. About 35 people gathered at the Katanning Department of Agriculture lecture theatre on the Saturday morning. Some had come from over 200kms. away which showed their enthusiasm to learn more about Hakeas. Bev Lockley introduced the speakers, and so I had the privilege of talking about the Hakea genus and how to propagate them. Tony Crawford then spoke about growing Tasmanian Hakeas and those he had growing in his garden near Hobart. I was surprised to see Hakea archaeiodes growing so well in his garden as it come from a warm temperate climate. Over lunch we showed a revolving digital pictures of nearly all the Hakeas from Western Australia. After lunch Bev took us out to her property at Katanning where we were shown some of the Hakeas she had planted. These included preissii, pandanicarpa, nitida, lissocarpa, corymbosa, drupacea, francisiana, prostrata, multilineata, obliqua ssp parviflora, obtusa, orthorrhyncha, petiolaris ssp trichophylla, trifurcata and undulata. There are probably a few more that I did not note down.

I am surprised that many of the Hakeas have done so well in such a dry climate and poor soils. Bev and her sister Margo bought the property some fifteen years ago. It was 170 acres of denuded land with a few mature Eucalyptus wandoos and the rest mainly salt infested soil. They set about planting over 100000 trees to lower the water table and make the land suitable for planting other natives as well. To see it today you have to admire their enthusiasm and energy. The soil consists of about 50mm of sandy loam overlying a cracking grey-white clay that is like concrete when dry. However the Hakeas seem to grow slowly and surely in this difficult environment where the annual rainfall is about 300mm.

It would have been nice to have had time to fit a few more things in,

such as listening to Jennifer Young talk about her photography and her books on Hakeas of Western Australia. We would have had to start much earlier and that was not possible as many people had to travel long distances to get to Katanning. Bev Lockley did an excellent job organising the weekend and I thank her sincerely for her efforts.

We gathered again on Sunday morning at Cranbrook and 30 people then set off into the Stirling Ranges National Park. We went down Salt River Road on the northern boundary and stopped at various places to look at Hakeas. The enthusiasm of the people was amazing. The excitement of seeing another Hakea species saw them writing down names and identifying features. Along Salt River Road we saw *pritzilii*, *pandanicaarpa* ssp *crassifolia*, *trifurcata*, *ambigua*, *corymbosa*, *gilbertii*, *incrassata*, *lissocarpa*, *nitida*, *obliqua* ssp *parviflora*, and *prostrata*. After lunch we went back along Stirling Range Drive and stopped to see *undulata*, *cucullata*, *ferruginea*, *lehmanniana*, *baxteri*, *ruscifolia* and *denticulata*. The latter saw Tom Constant so pleased to discover it that he put his nose right into the bush to smell the unpleasant odour. In all we saw 18 of some 24 species within the park, which was a great effort considering it was nearly 4pm. before we left the last scenic point.

The trip allowed me to catch up with nearly all the Hakea Study group members in Western Australia. Bev Lockley, Tom and Hanna Chrojka, Jennifer Young and Margaret Pieroni. Unfortunately Kevin Collins was overseas but thanks to his kindness I was able to look at some of his Hakeas on the Banksia Farm.

Wanderings around WA.

I also managed to have a brief look at Hakeas growing in other areas. We went up to Dalwallin and took the road out to Mount Gibson to look at the wreath *lechenaultia* which were up to 700mm across. Along the way we stopped to look at Hakea *preissii* growing near salt lakes, Hakea *recurva*, *francisiana*, *scoparia*, *invaginata* and *erecta*.

Another favourite location is a gravel pit beside the Moora-Badgingarra Road about 25klms. west of Moora. Here in a small area Hakea *incrassata*, *prostrata*, *smilacifolia*, *stenocarpa*, *spathulata*, *brownii*, *platysperma*, and *trifurcata* are growing in buck shot gravel.

I spent half a day with Margaret Pieroni looking at the wind swept flora of Cheney Beach. It is a fascinating place with lovely beaches, rocky outcrops in to the sea and sometimes whales enjoying the calm waters. Margaret wanted me to have a look at how the Hakeas grow in this environment. Hakea *lasiantha*, *ceratophylla*, *prostrata* and *baxteri* grow here as prostrate plants. A few klms.inland they are much more erect.

However one of the most beautiful areas has to be the circular road into the base of Mount Lesueur. If you take the walking tracks out to Mount Lesueur and other places you will come across Hakeas *conchifolia*, *costata*, *eneabba*, *incrassata*, *stenocarpa*, *neurophylla*, *flabellifolia*, *spathulata*, *psilorrhyncha*, *anadenia*, *brownii*, *prostrata*, *trifurcata*, and *ruscifolia*. *Megalosperma* grows there too away from the tracks, but I know where to stop along the Brand Highway to see it.

Lastly in the hills behind Bullsbrook and towards John Forest National Park Hakea *cyclocarpa*, *amplexicaulis*, *erinacea*, *petiolaris* ssp *petiolaris*, *cristata* and *undulata* can be discovered without too much effort. Unfortunately housing development is now threatening the survival of these species.

So in a matter of a week I was able to see many of the Western Australian Hakeas.

Hakea acuminata at Kings Park, Perth.

In the rare and endangered section of the gardens there are a number of young specimens of Hakea acuminata. I was surprised to see these plants which are nearly 800mm high with long narrow elliptic leaves of approximately 125mm long x 12mm wide. They look nothing like the leaves on plants that Max Ewer and I have where the leaf is much shorter, wider and in whorles. Perhaps they are still in the juvenile leaf stage, but at that height you would expect the mature foliage to be appearing. Next time I am in Perth I will have another look to see if the foliage has changed. I am told that a survey of the Fitzgerald National park has been undertaken to see just how many locations this Hakea still exists. However I expect there will not be too many.

Max Ewer turns 90.

Our Hakea propagator extraordinary turns 90 on the 20th. of November. Max has decided he will be in Sydney at that time, so there will be no party at Naracoorte. However we wish him a wonderful birthday.

Financial statement.

Balance forward from 30 th . June, 2012	\$2474-09
Income	275-00
Subscriptions	
Expenditure, printing and postage of newsletter No. 49	71-00
Balance as of 30 th . September 2012	\$2678-09

Thankyou to all those who have forwarded their subscriptions.

Welcome to new members.

We welcome Peter and Lee Eskdaile from Tamworth and the APS Menai Group from NSW.

News from members.

Tony Crawford has sent me a list of Hakeas he is growing in Tasmania near Hobart. I will list them all as I believe it is beneficial for members to see that many Hakeas adapt to cooler climates. Amplexicaulis, archaeoides, baxteri, Burrendong beauty, cinera, corymbosa, cygna ssp cygna, dactyloides, decurrens, drupacea, epiglottis, eriantha, hookerana, invaginata, laurina, lissocarpha, lorea, macreana, megadenia, macrocarpa, mitchellii, nitida, obliqua, oleifolia, pandanicarpa, petiolaris, platysperma, preissii, prostrata, salicifolia, scoparia, stenocarpa, undulata, varia, verrucosa.

Visit to Para Group in South Australia.

I happened to be in South Australia in July when the Para Group were having a meeting on Hakeas. Hans Greisser invited me along to join him as one of the speakers. It was an enjoyable evening as Hans had digital photos projected onto a screen so their potential to be grown in the Gawler area could be discussed.

I also had a look around the gardens of Thelma and Malcolm Vandepier in Adelaide and Bev and Ian Rice at Truo to see how their Hakeas were progressing and enjoy a whole range of other genera as well.

Hakea leaf shape.

Barry Teague has a Hakea growing in his garden that has a quite unusual leaf shape. They are up to 150mm long, 12mm wide in the middle and taper at the ends to a thin stalk or point. There are three prominent longitudinal veins and some cross venations. The margins are entire and could be an outside longitudinal vein as well. The flower is cream and

similar to that of *meisneriana*. I think the plant originally came from Max Ewer. Do any members have a similar plant in their gardens or can forward any further information on what species it may be. A photo of the leaf and flower is included at the end of the newsletter.

Hakea seed.

I do have seed of quite a number of the Hakeas, so if members are requiring seed please let me know. Tom Constant drew my attention to how easy it was to find information and seed availability using the internet. Just type in www.Hakea, the species name and you will be surprised what information is available.

I have been able to get cuttings of *Hakea chromatropa*, thanks to the assistance of one of our Western Australian members. It has only been recently named and looks like a red flowered form of *Hakea ilicifolia*. If the cuttings strike, which at present look promising, then we will get this species into members gardens quickly as it is very rare in the wild.

A nurseryman in Colac, Victoria is trialling cuttings of the variegated form of *Hakea salicifolia*. So far he has some success.

My trials with cuttings of *Hakea tuberculata* have been successful. I can report it strikes readily. I will put a lot more cuttings in during November so that members can have it in their garden. It comes from near Albany in Western Australia in gravelly clay soils.

Hakea ferruginea.

This is another Hakea in the *undulata* group. They all have seed capsules that are decurved, usually smooth surface and the capsules finish with a tapering beak which is not horned. The exception to not having a tapering beak are the eastern States species of *dactyloides* and *laevipes*. Capsules 2.0 to 3.1cm long, 1.1 to 1.8 cm wide.

Ferruginea occurs from Albany to Esperance along the coast with an inland occurrence in the Stirling Ranges. It prefers to grow in mallee heath and open forest in lateritic sands. We saw plants up to 3m high along Stirling Range Drive. Flowers white in apex of leaf.

The leaves are sessile and dark green in colour, varying from heart shaped to narrow ovate ending in a hard tapering point. The margin is entire and slightly wavy. There are 3, rarely 5 longitudinal veins with prominent cross venation. Leaves 1.5 to 8.5cm long, 1.2 to 2.7cm wide.

In our gardens it will grow in a clay loam to sandy loam soils which must be well drained. In inland gardens it requires a shady location and some summer watering as it comes from a cooler climate with a 1000 to 1500mm rainfall. *Hakea hastata* is very similar but has smaller leaves and grows further inland.

Donation of Hakea plants to the Cranbourne Botanic Gardens.

Following a request from the head propagator at the gardens I have given them plants of *Hakea flabellifolia* and *longiflora*. I am very grateful to Max Ewer and Barry Teague who propagated the plants. There are a couple of more species we have been requested to help with and they are being propagated at present.

I hope you enjoy watching your Hakeas grow and flower this season. Please keep reports coming in of your successes and failures. May you all enjoy the Christmas season which seems to come around quicker than ever. I have included photos taken of our Hakea crawl in the Stirling Ranges. *Hakea cucullata* can be an untidy bush in the wild but occasionally a nice compact shrub is found. It benefits from pruning in our gardens.

Regards, Paul.





