

AUSTRALIAN NATIVE PLANTS SOCIETY, AUSTRALIA

HAKEA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER NO. 52

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Dear members.

Most of you will be surprised to find that we have shifted to Colac. The last few summers at Strathmerton have been very hot and dry. The effort to keep smaller plants alive in an arboretum of 18 acres coupled with decreasing stamina made us decide it was time to move to a smaller acreage and a wetter and cooler summer climate. So here we are in a rented property with glorious views over Lake Colac. So what has happened to our magnificent arboretum? Well the new owners are interested in keeping the garden as it is, but unless they put in a reticulated watering system with sprinklers, I can see many of the smaller Hakeas and Banksias dying from lack of moisture in summer.

The good news is that we have bought an acre of land in Elliminyt (a southern suburb of Colac) which has deep loamy soil on a slight slope. It should be ideal to grow Hakeas and Banksias. With this in mind before we shifted I dug up a number of Hakeas and potted them on, putting plastic covers over them for the first three weeks, hoping they would put out new roots. So far so good and all are still alive. I thank Phil and Cantriona Trickett for coming down from Ulladulla to take cuttings of some 60 species of Hakea for the purposes of propagating from cuttings and grafting. So by this time next year I am hoping most of the Hakea species will be back in the ground at Colac.

In walking around the streets I have come across some Hakeas, *laurina*, *decurrens* ssp. *physocarpa*, a variegated form of *salicifolia* and *drupacea*. A lot of the soil in this area is clay with loamy soils more likely to be found back in the foothills of the Otways. The rainfall is about 900mm, more than twice what we received in Strathmerton when we did not have a drought year. The mornings are about 2 degrees C warmer than Strathmerton but the maximum day temperature in winter is about 2 degrees C less. Frosts are not so likely which is good news for the sensitive ones.

Please note our new address and phone number.

The 2013 autumn at Strathmerton.

The hot summer lingered on well into April and many of the well established Hakeas that had not been watered hung on looking very tired. However we did lose two Hakea *laurineas*, two *mitchellii*'s, a Hakea *nodosa* and two Hakea *salicifolias*. The latter probably from a very hot day of 46 degrees C. I was surprised the *mitchellii*'s did not survive in deep sand as I have seen them growing in sandy soils in the Bordertown area of South Australia. However there may be heavier soils containing moisture underneath that ensures their survival in the wild.

ANPSA conference and seminar.

I will be attending the ANPSA conference and seminar at Coolumb in August. I will take with me a display board of photos of Hakeas and some spare newsletters to hand out to interested people. I have also been asked to give a ten minute presentation on the Hakea Study Group and Hakeas of Queensland. If other Hakea Study group members are attending I will endeavour to catch up with you all and perhaps have a brief gathering to exchange ideas for the future.

News from members.

Hans Griessner has written about the damage the yellow tailed black cockatoos have done to his Hakeas. They have decimated the seed capsules on Hakea *salicifolia*, *petiolaris*, *rostrata* and *carinata*. They even trim the branches to get at the seed. However they have not touched the seed on *dohertyi*, *pandanicarpa* and *constablei*. The latter two have very large seed capsules and the cockatoos may not be able to get their beak around them. I remembered the late Geoff Cooke showing me his hedge of Hakea *salicifolia* beautifully trimmed by them at Wiseleigh in Gippsland.

Paul Shearston.

Paul is looking after the Hakea collection in the Hunter Region Botanic Gardens just north of Newcastle. He is experimenting with grafting of Hakeas.

Joe Boevink.

Joe lives in north west Tasmania where rainfall is usually plentiful. However this last summer has been dry. He has listed Hakea *drupacea*, *megadenia* and *nodosa* as possible for wet places. He is growing these on the side of a dam just above full water level. I suspect these are in clay which could insulate their roots from becoming too wet. Our island in the middle of the dam has been covered over by 150mm of water on a few occasions and plants on it have not died from water logging which I believe was due to the clay soil limiting the amount of moisture to their roots.

Brendon Stahl.

Brendon is now living in Colac and has a acre of land on which to establish a native garden. So far Hakea *neurophylla*, *macreana*, and *pandanicarpa* ssp. *crassifolia* have been planted with many more to go in.

Financial statement.	
Balance forward 1 st . March 2013	2725-76
Income.	
Subscriptions	102-55
Expenditure.	
Printing and postage of newsletter No. 51	82.50
Balance as of 30 th . June, 2013	2745-81

Subscriptions are now due.

Many members have paid for more than one year. To let you know how you stand financially, I will let e mail members know by e mail and those receiving the newsletter by post there will be a note to say where you stand financially in the newsletter. Thank you for all the support you have given the Study Group which now stands at 100 members.

New members.

We welcome Victoria Tanner from Canberra. The climate variation between winter and summer can be a challenge to grow many Hakeas successfully, however in the past there have been many Hakea species grown in the botanic gardens. I remember a Hakea amplexicaulis which grew to 3m high and had a seat under it. They later removed it when they remodelled that part of the gardens.

Hakeas of the ulicina group.

It is quite a large group, consisting of 21 species. In this newsletter I will endeavour to outline a number of species that come from Victoria and South Australia. Most are seldom grown in our gardens because they do not have that showy effect, however they deserve to be grown more because they are hardy and some provide great protection and nesting sites for our small birds.

Hakea ulicina.

Dwarf to tall shrub to 4m. Roots not suckering. New growth hairy, leaves linear, stiff, flat or trigonous, dark green and erect to 180mm., 1.5 to 4mm wide, twisted at base, longitudinally veined 1 to 3 prominent top and bottom, with a sharp point. White to cream axillary flowers, August to November. Seed capsules to 2.5cm long smooth or with black pustules and a short straight beak. A widespread species that is killed by fire and regenerates easily from seed. Will grow in a wide range of soil types and prefers dappled shade in areas on and north of the divide. Extends from the Otway Ranges to far south eastern NSW and islands in Bass Strait.

Hakea repullulans.

A shrub to 2.5m. with lignotuber and suckering habit, leaves stiff, linear, marginal veins prominent, longitudinal veins prominent with 3 to 5 veins above and below, widely spreading to 140mm. by 3 to 12mm wide, twisted at base, cream to white axillary flowers, September to November. Fruit sessile to 2.5cm. with narrow beak and covered with tiny black pustules. This species often forms colonies especially after fires. Grows easily in well drained soils with some moisture. Tolerant of moderate frost. Extends from the Otway Ranges to SE South Australia, the Grampians and lower mallee regions. An outlier near Sale, Vic.

Hakea mitchellii.

A rounded shrub to 3m by 3m, with dense subterete to linear and trigonous leaves widely spreading to 120mm long and 1 to 10mm wide. Longitudinal veins prominent and three at angles (marginal vein and midvein on underside) in trigonous and flat leaves. White to yellow flowers, October to January. Seed capsules to 2.5cm. long with tiny black pustules. Grows well in sandy soils in inland areas and is frost tolerant. Will also tolerate limestone soils. Grew well at Strathmerton on sandy soils over 17 years but for some reason died in the later part of last summer when the dry period was prolonged. Great pant for small birds such as wrens to nest in. Occurs in SA on Eyre and Yorke Peninsulas, Kangaroo Island, and in the mallee south of the Murray River as far as Naracoorte.

Hakea aenigma.

Grows only on the western end of Kangaroo Island. It is considered to be a clone as no seed has been collected. Under threat from farming enterprises. A shrub to 2m high with a lignotuber and horizontal suckering roots. Leaves to 35cm long and 10mm wide, stiff and linear. Flowers axillary, cream to white. Forms colonies in mallee woodland. Soils loamy to clay loam, well drained. Comes from a cool temperate climate and 700mm plus rainfall. Moderately frost tolerant. Plants have been grown from cuttings and grafting. Prefers to grow in climate with cool summers, but has survived with added moisture in dryer climates such as Strathmerton.

Hakea carinata.

A shrub 2.5m from southern South Australia with stiff leathery flat to concave leaves to 24cm long and 1 to 12mm wide. Marginal veins prominent, midvein only or sometimes 3 longitudinal veins prominent below, not or scarcely visible above. Small white to cream flowers September to October. Fruit to 2.6cm long. Grows in heathy dry sclerophyll forest such as Cox's conservation reserve south of Adelaide. Grows easily in a wide range of soil types and tolerant of moderate frosts. Prefers some added moisture in dry periods north of the divide.

Hakea terminology.

In Flora of Australia, volume 17b under the section on Hakeas the description of seed can sometimes be confusing. I asked Dr. Peter Weston of the Sydney Herbarium to give us an explanation of what they meant in relation to Hakea decurrens in particular. He writes, the description of Hakea decurrens as having a seed "wing $\frac{3}{4}$ to fully down one side" refers only to the seed itself, not the fruit capsule. It means that the seed wing extends down of the seed body (the part that encloses the embryo) for 75% to 100% of the length of the seed body. My understanding of the description of the seed of Hakea gibbosa as having its "wing almost fully decurrent down one side of the seed body only, with seed body flanged on the other side" is that on one side of the seed, the wing extends almost to the base of the seed body, but on the other side, the seed body itself thins at the margin as a wing like flange. I hope it does not further confuse you!!

Photo of potted plants.

At the end of this newsletter I have included a photo showing how I removed Hakea pulvinifera from our Strathmerton garden. I have heard of others transferring plants from their gardens with success when shifting. Some years ago Thelma Vandeeper successfully dug up Hakea plants and transferred them to her new property at St. Peters in Adelaide.

There were some rare Hakeas which I did not want to leave behind. Fortunately I had some young plants that I could dig up. I dug a spade depth around each plant and then cut off the tap root. After lifting out of the ground I removed excess soil and pruned back side roots so that the plant was able to be put into a large black plastic pot. I put some slow release fertiliser and low phosphorus potting mix back around the plant and then watered in. A large plastic bag was then put over the plant and tied down around the rim of the pot. To make it easy to inspect and water I attached the ends of a piece of string to a rubber band so that I could easily remove the tie to lift the plastic and inspect. The Hakeas all look OK three weeks later and I have removed the plastic covers and put out into a semi shaded spot. The Hakeas I removed were, pulvinifera, fraseri, aculeata, myrtoides, recurva ssp. arida, rhombales, and lorea ssp. borealis. I also removed a Banksia rosserae which looks OK too.

Well my apologies for being late getting this issue out, however shifting house is a major operation and time consuming. Then there is the task of unpacking and finding the things you need to live in a rented place. The double garage is still full of unpacked things waiting our final move. In the meantime I wish you all well in your endeavours with growing Hakeas. Regards, Paul.