AUSTRALIAN NATIVE PLANTS SOCIETY AUSTRALIA

HAKEA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER No. 54

FEBRUARY 2014 ISSN0727-7008

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Dear members.

Welcome to 2014. I hope our gardens will receive plenty of rain this year and not have to put up with drought and long periods of heat. January and the beginning of February have been very hot, most unusual for the Colac area where the locals are used to getting cool changes with some moisture. The average January rainfall is 47mm but this year only about 23mm, all of which came in the first few days of the new year. The new house on our property is coming along slowly. I had hoped it would be finished by the end of April, but the more I see of the builder brings me to the conclusion that he is not well organized, waiting for one segment to be finished before ordering the next. Nevertheless I am putting down seed and making plans to pick up Hakeas and other plants from friends and APS plant sales. If the house is not sufficiently finished by April I may rope off some areas and start planting.
On Australia day this year I received an award that I had never expected to come my way. However members of APS Victoria awards Committee had put my name forward for the Order of Australia Medal and much to my surprise I received a letter from Canberra saying that I was a recipient. I feel very honoured but at the same time I think of all those hard working members of the Society who have helped me in various ways and continue to do so. Thank you to all those that have sent me congratulatory messages.

Propagation

In cooler areas now is the time to start putting Hakea seed in. For others March- April depending on when the hot part of summer has passed. One Hakea that grows well from cuttings is Hakea clavata and they seem only to take root if put in February. I do not know the reason for this but it must have something to do with the day/night temperatures and that the leaf has certain elements in it that aid propagation. I have discovered one of our Colac APS Vic. members has a large bush on crumbly grey clay loam which flowers well each year but sets little or no seed. Brendon Stahl, a Colac Hakea Study group member has put cuttings down in

his hot house and we are hoping for a good response. Brendon has also germinated salicifolia, platysperma and baxteri. Most of the northern Hakeas do not retain their seed in the woody capsule and release it as soon as it is ripe. It is therefore difficult to get hold of seed of these species unless you happen to be there in the November to December period. I am hoping some members may have garden plants from which we can collect seed. The species the Hakea seed bank needs are arborescens, pedunculata, persiehiana, trineura, archaeoides, plurinervia, macrocarpa, divaricata, lorea, chordophylla, lorea, edniana and ivoryi.

Pollinators.

I have only received one response so far but hope as the year progresses more will come in. Sue and Graeme Jones from near Sale in Victoria write: Thought I would drop you a line while it is fresh in my mind – I see in your newsletter that it is thought that Hakea corymbosa and Hakea platysperma are pollinated by mammals. But, to the best of our knowledge, we have no mammals close by – other than rats and mice. We have never seen a possum in the area (our six acres are close to town and surrounded by farmland). Yet both our Hakea corymbosa and Hakea platysperma have set seed. I have been very interested in insects for a while and did note last year that the then three year old Hakea corymbosa was being visited by many Cream spotted Ichneumon wasps. But of course I was only taking photos and did not study them enough to know if they were transferring pollen. The plant did set seed. Our three year old Hakea platysperma was covered with flowers this year and is now forming over a dozen seed pods. I did spend some time taking photos of the flowers and looking for insects, but the only thing we noted on the flowers was a blue fly!! But I did my observing in late afternoon and so was not looking at the right time of day. A friend who studies pollinators of orchids told us 11am is called "wasp o'clock" and that is the time that I should have been at the Hakea observing. We have never seen birds visit the flowers of either of these species and are just pretty sure there are no possums here doing the pollinating of these plants either. Thanks Sue and Graeme for your comments. Another angle of thought on Hakea corymbosa is that the new leaves are soft when in flower and that after flowering these leaves grow up around the old flower to protect any seed that is forming and become stiff and hard pointed so that cockatoos etc. cannot get at the seed!!

December issue of AP. No. 217

In this issue Jim Barrow, a retired Western Australian CSIRO scientist gives an overview of Proteaceae and then discusses the differences in genera. He outlines the differences between Hakea and Grevillea being as follows.

1 A woody seed capsule with two contrasting layers of wood, an inner layer of red brown wood and an outer layer of pale wood.

2 In most Hakeas the leaf surface is similar.

3 In most Hakeas the styles and ovaries do not have hairs whilst Grevilleas do.

4 Apart from corkwoods, the ovaries do not have stalks whilst Grevilleas do.

It is well worth getting a copy of AP No. 217 as if you happen to be in WA it would certainly help to distinguish those other genera of the Proteaceae family.

News from members.

Royce Raleigh and his wife Jeanne survived a horrific bush fire in the northern Grampians in January 2014. The fire came down the western side of their property and then later with a wind change came back to attack the eastern side. With the help of fire fighters they managed to save the house and most of the garden and the hot house. All their boundary fences were burnt and now the Kangaroos are moving in as it is the only bit of greenery around. They have been growing native plants there for over forty years and have a large collection of Hakeas. Unfortunately some of the very old plants have died due to the heat from the fire and drought. Royce said a Hakea cross between francisiana and probably petiolaris was killed by the fire and all the seed capsules are now opening. As the soil is sandy, he is hoping many seedlings will emerge when rain finally comes.
Hans Greisser from near Gawler in the Adelaide hills writes: A couple of fires were a bit close but got extinguished quickly. The heat was less forgiving. I have never seen a summer like this. Some young plants died in a moist potting mix, it looked like they could not take up enough moisture fast enough. But again I am impressed by the Hakeas, most look totally unphazed except for Hakea amplexicaulis. I put some small plants in the ground in Spring and all are surviving. I did a headcount, I now have up to 101 Hakea plants.
Well done Hans. Allowing for having a couple of some species, you must have 85 plus species which is fantastic. Hakea amplexicaulis is usually very hardy and forms a lignotuber. My brother in law in Perth runs the mower over them in his back yard and they just keep shooting up. I note heavy rains fell across the Adelaide hills in mid February, so your garden should now be looking fresh and green.

New members.

We welcome Paul Fulton from Colac in Victoria. Paul works part time in the nursery trade and is keen to learn more about growing Hakeas.

Financial statement.

Balance forward 30th. October 2013	$3165-81
Income	
Membership fees and donation	150-00
Expenditure Hakea newsletter No. 53, print and post	94-00
Balance forward	$3221-81

I thank the Queensland organizing committee for their generous donation of $100 from the profits of the ANPSA conference and seminar to the Study Group.

Field trip in WA 2014

At this stage a number of WA members have indicated their interest in wandering north of Perth up to Mount Leseur NP. We should be able to locate at least 30 species over two to three days, which is approximately one third of all the Hakeas in WA. At this stage I am looking at mid September so that we are finished by the 26th. of September when school holidays begin.

Hakea propinqua and Hakea constablei

I have chosen these two Hakeas as they both have large blackish seed capsules. Both are found in the Blue Mountains area west of Sydney. They are poorly known as garden plants and deserve to be grown more often in cooler wetter climates.
Hakea constablei is in the sericea group and occurs on rocky sandstone outcrops in dry sclerophyll forests at altitudes above 500m. It can reach heights of 6m but at Strathmerton it grew no bigger than 2m. Leaves tend to be upright, terete, not grooved 3-11cm long and 1 - 1.6mm diameter. Inflorescence a bundle of 6 to 12 flowers, white, perianth 3 to 4.2 mm long, pistil 8 to 12mm long. Fruit obliquely elliptic 4.5 to 5.5 cm long and 3 to 3.5 cm wide., coarsely rugose and often pusticulate as well, black in color.

Hakea proquinqua.

It is grouped in the nodosa group of which there is only three species. Nodosa, pachyphylla and proquinqua. It is more conifer like in shape to 1.5m high. Leaves terete to slightly flattened, not over stiff 0.8 -5cm long and 0.7 -2.5mm wide. Inflorescence 6-10 flowers, white. Perianth 1.5 to 2.2mm long, Pistil 4 to 4.5mm long. Fruit ovate elliptic 3.5 to 4.5cm long, 2.5 to 3cm wide, coarsely tuberculate and dark brown to black in color. This species also occurs in the Sydney region, but with urban development is probably confined to reserves and National Parks. Hakea patchyphylla also grows in the Sydney region but has shorter leaves and smaller fruit.

The photo of Hakea corymbosa with the Cream spotted Lchneumon wasp was provided by Graeme and Sue Jones and assembled with Hakea erinacea by Hans Greisser. I thank both of them for their assistance.

Dr Peter Weston spoke to APS NSW February gathering on the results of DNA analysis on Hakeas and Grevilleas. It appears Hakeas will remain Hakeas but there could be ramifications for how Grevilleas are dealt with. I hope to have more on this in the next issue.

I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter and those that have been experiencing drought conditions have now received good rains. It is always lovely in autumn to sit back after rain and watch the plants recover from the heat of summer. It is also the time to start putting in new plants before the cold of winter approaches. Please keep reports coming in, cheers, Paul.

Paul

Hakea erinacea

Hakea corymbosa with cream-spotted Ichneumon wasp