

AUSTRALIAN NATIVE PLANTS SOCIETY AUSTRALIA

HAKEA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER No.55

JUNE 2014

ISSN0727-7008

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Dear members.

I am writing this newsletter as we pack up to shift into our new home in Elliminyt, a suburb of Colac. It is now one year since we left Strathmerton and we will be glad to be back in a place of our own.

Over the past month I have travelled to a number of places to pick up Hakea plants and hopefully when we start planting in July there will be at least 85 species of Hakea to go in the ground. The program is then to add the remaining 83 species over the next 12 months mainly by growing them from seed.

This year we attended the Adelaide native plant sale and purchased a few Hakeas there, but the selection available was minimal. Another thirty came from the Bacchus Marsh/Melton Group plant sale and forty five from Phil Trickett at Milton. Phil had taken cuttings of many Hakeas before we left Strathmerton and is a master grafter. It is great to have someone who can graft rare and difficult to grow species as that makes it a lot easier to bring these into cultivation.

The autumn weather here in Colac has been rather mild with days of 18 to 25 degrees C. The rainfall has been less than normal but enough to keep the grass green and allow established plants to survive.

Apart from coastal areas, rainfall in most places has been significantly less. There has been a very long hot dry summer in Western Australia and across inland Queensland. The normally lush New England plateau has been in drought for nearly two years and some have had to revert to buying water to keep their gardens alive.

Royce Raleigh's garden mostly escaped the bush fire in the northern Grampians but up to the end of April only 13mm had fallen. Una Graff from Gilgandra said the summer was particularly hot but were lucky enough to receive good rains in March.

Hakea crawl.

The date set down is the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>.of September starting from Bullsbrook on Saturday morning and finishing up

at Eneabba on the Sunday afternoon. Some are staying on to look at unspoilt areas of bush on private properties in the Three Springs area on Monday. In all we hope to find some forty species of Hakea. So far eight members have indicated they are participating and we can accommodate more but I will need to be advised quickly.

Vale Alan Griinke.

In early June I received the news that Alan had passed away after a long illness. I have fond memories of the trip we did out to the Quilpie area to look at Hakeas and Eremophilias. Back in Toowoomba he had a wonderful native garden full of the plants he loved. He was also an avid propagator. Our condolence goes out to his wife Ruth and his family.

Letters from members

Hans Griesser from Gumeracha near Gawler, SA.

After a very hot early summer period 120mm of rain fell over two days in mid February. The temperature then dropped to the low 30 degrees C after the rain and many Hakeas began to put on growth in March/ April. The arrival of autumn saw Hakea cycloptera, petiolaris and verrucosa come into flower. Many of the Hakeas such as Hakea florida are now large shrubs. The yellow-tailed black cockatoos drop by now and then, whilst they take nuts from a wide range of species, their favourite seems to be the four plants of Hakea carinata. They clip off the branches to get the nuts. To me it is free pruning and they turn the bushes into a nice round shape.

Hakeas are easier to grow than Banksias. A plant of Hakea ivoryi has grown much quicker than I expected as in the wild they are known to be slow growing and long lived. Hakea victoria looks just like the photo in the newsletter, nice leaves and a fair bit of yellow but no orange or red color yet. It is about one metre high, flowers well and the seed is hidden by the leaves. Paul's comments. Hans garden is on a sloping hillside with loamy type soils which are ideal for growing Hakeas.

Graeme Krake from Brogo NSW.

The southern coastal area of NSW has had a dry summer, (46mm as against 281mm in 2013) but received good rains of 53mm in March. He has had a few losses with the Hakeas, mainly the less well established plants over summer. Has had two days over 40 degrees C and a few in the high 30 degrees C. He has since replanted most of the species he lost and is now waiting for them to get their roots down. The Hakea longilifora's plants have readily set seed but seem to be subject to insect predation.

Graeme has two forms of Hakea eriantha. He writes that one plant came from seed through the Hakea Study group in 2009 which seems to conform to the standard wide leaf form of

eriantha. This particular plant flowers profusely and sets seed readily. The other plant is from local seed obtained from Nethercote (north of Eden) which is a narrow leaf form (less than 5mm in width). This plant in the garden is adjacent to the wider leaf form but the Nethercote plants set very little seed- only 2 to 3 seeds annually on a 3m high plant. He will have a look to see if the same insects pollinate both when they next flower. The seeds on the Nethercote plant are shorter and broader than the wide leaf form.

Paul's comment. There are two forms of eriantha recognised in Flora of Australia. The late Geoff Cooke took me out to Lake Tyers east of Lakes Entrance to show me a 5m high specimen of the fine leaf form. Thinking back it did not have much seed on it either. Maybe a characteristic of the species. When back at Nethercote can you have a look at the plants there to see if they set much seed. In respect to insect predation, it would be interesting to know if any other Hakeas at Graeme's place are attacked. I have seen bad insect infestations on Hakea decurrens ssp. platyaenia at Green Cape where the plants are nearly prostrate in long tussocky grass. Graeme's soil is of a loamy type set in a valley adjacent to steep hill sides of natural bush.

Bev Lockley, Katanning WA.

Only 3mm of rain over the past five months. Mature Hakeas have plenty of buds. Hakea corymbosa has flowered well and set seed. She thinks insects and honey eaters are the pollinators.

Paul's comments. Bev has restored about 170 acres of cleared salt infested land back into open woodland. The Hakeas grow on a shallow sandy loam over lying clays which seem to hold moisture at depth. Considering the hot dry summers they have I am surprised how well the Hakeas survive.

Una Graff from Gilandra, NSW.

We have had a very hot dry summer which followed a fairly dry 2013. We had one day of 45 degrees C but it was the hot wind that did the damage to plants. The only loss was a Hakea salicifolia which I had planted in the Spring.

Hakea eyreana seemed right at home, good rain in March 2013 followed by dry weather suited its flowering which went from May to October. Not just single flower spikes but in bunches. It also produced quite a few seeds but not as many as I expected. All pollinators at our place are done by birds and insects as we have no mammals. We have a large number of honey eaters around when any Hakeas are in flower.

I have three Hakea platyspermas all propagated at the same time. One is growing very slowly, the second is a beautifully shaped large shrub which is covered in flowers every year. It has only set two seed capsules, the small birds, mainly finches nest in this plant. The third plant is a bit straggly, flowers a bit but has set a lot of seed. They are all growing in the same area so I do not know why the great difference.

I had a very sad looking *Hakea bucculenta*, I wasn't sure what to do, so with a "what I have to lose attitude" I pruned all the dead wood out, cut off all the seed capsules, cleaned the grass from around it and threw a couple of hand fulls of chook poo, and watered in. There are now a lot of healthy new leaves, whether I get any flowers in the Spring remains to be seen. I may do the same to a 23 year old *Hakea multilineata* that is looking sad.

Paul's comments. Una has shallow sandy loam soils overlying clays and weathered rock. Her climate suits the inland Hakeas. *Hakea salicifolia* comes from coastal summer wet areas and never liked the hot summers at Strathmerton. I can understand why it has not survived at Gilgandra.

#### Financial statement.

Balance forward	3221-81
Income Nil.	
Expenditure	
Hakea newsletter No. 54 print and post	95-00
Balance as of 16 <sup>th</sup> . June 2014	3126-81

As a new financial year begins on July 1<sup>st</sup>. I will send out an note to those who are not financial early in July.

#### Wanderings.

During May we made our way up to Milton to collect some Hakeas and Banksias. Along the way we stopped to look at some Hakea populations. On the road from Canberra to Nowra there is a profound change in soil from the clay loams to the sandstones and on top of the range in the Morton NP we stopped to look at specimens of *Hakea sericea* and *Hakea dactyloides*. *Hakea sericea* only grows naturally in NSW and southern Queensland and hence cannot be confused with *Hakea decurrens*. In this location *Hakea sericea* grows into a fairly upright plant to 2.5m with one or two trunks. The terete leaves are quite small in diameter and about 30mm long. The seed capsules are very large.

*Hakea dactyloides* also tends to grow upright to 2.4m with a single stem and quite open structure. The seed capsules are large and bend downwards.

On the next day Phil and Catriona Trickett took us out to high point in the Budawang range escarpment over looking Milton and Ulladulla. Here the climate was much wetter and milder and the sandy loam soils supported a lush variety of flora. The main Hakea growing here was *Hakea teretifolia* which consisted of dense large bushes 2.4m high by 2m wide. The inner parts of the bush had a lot of dead branches which seem to form as the plants become old. The dagger like seed capsules were very plentiful, as bird life here is quite prolific as *Banksia ericifolia* flowers for many months of the year. It is an area where the two forms of *Hakea teretifolia*

overlap and when not in flower is difficult to distinguish which form it is. Ssp. teretifolia has densely appressed-sericeous hairs some suberect on the pedicel and perianth whereas ssp. hirsuta has densely tomentose hairs, some appressed on the perianth and pedicel. Ssp. teretifolia extends from Milton up to Coffs Harbour and ssp. hirsuta southwards into Victoria, the Grampians and Tasmania.

In the more open heathlands *Hakea laevipes* ssp *laevipes* occurs. These areas are quite wet after rains. *Hakea laevipes* is very similar to *Hakea dactyloides* except that it has a lignotuber. Here it was easy to distinguish as each plant had many stems coming up from the ground. The leaves were much smaller and the seed capsules about 2/3 the size of the *dactyloides* seed capsules we has seen the day before. The plants too were only about a metre high.

#### Seed bank.

I still have seed available of many species. I find that the seed tends to become unviable after five years, so the fresher it is the more chance of propagating success. I recently obtained some seed from the APS Victorian seed bank of *recurva* ssp *arida* which was at least ten years old and whilst it looked good I have had no success in getting any of it to germinate.

I am advised Nindethana Seed Company has a stock of fresh seed of *Hakea longiflora* from a private garden. Since this species is rare and endangered members are encouraged to obtain some whilst it is available.

#### Photos.

The photos at the end of this newsletter have been provided by Margaret Pieroni ( *Hakea kippistiana*, *obliqua* and *pandanocarpa*) and Tom Constant ( *Hakea victoria* from a private garden at Peaceful Bay- what a lovely name) and arranged to fit on an A4 page by Hans Griesser. I thank them all for their contribution.

Please do not forget to look at your *Hakeas* when they are flowering to see what is pollinating them. I am hoping we will get a good response to this project.

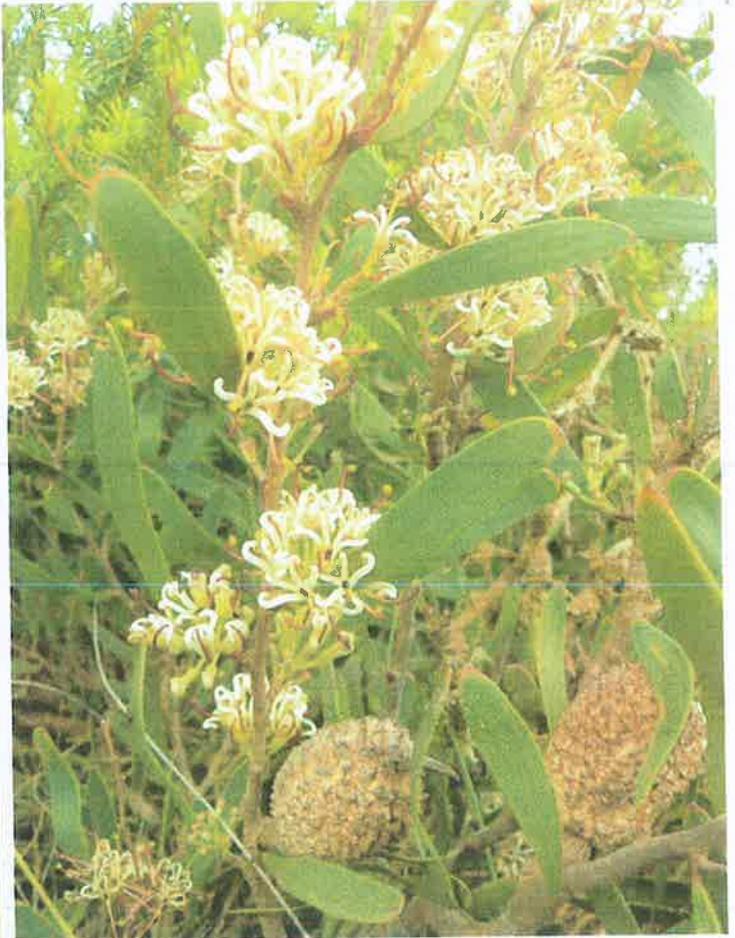
I hope to catch up with many members of the Study group in the next six months. Once we are in our new home and the *Hakeas* are in the ground, we will be looking forward to doing some travelling. Please note our new address at the top of the newsletter.

I hope the winter is not too cold and the badly needed rain in dry areas occurs. I intend to put light green plastic covers around many of my new *Hakeas* over winter and then as summer approaches but down layers of newspaper and mulch between the plants to smother the weeds. I look forward to a scene of growing *Hakeas* and *Banksias* and few weeds to attend to. Cheers to you all for now, Paul.

*Paul*



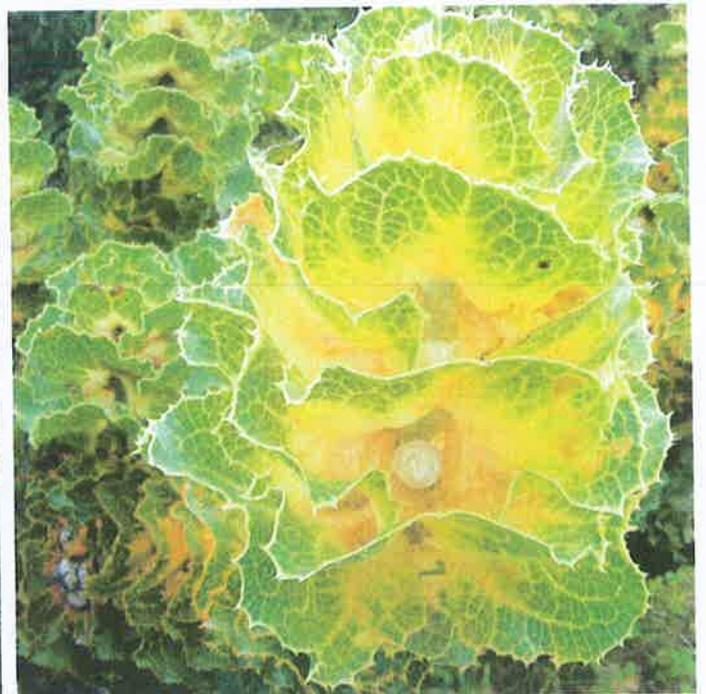
*Hakea obliqua* ssp. *obliqua*



*H. pandanicarpa* ssp. *pandanicarpa*



*H. kippistiana*



*H. victoria*