

HAKEA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER No. 60

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Dear members.

I commence this newsletter on Australia Day. I noted on television one question asked was how will you celebrate Australia day? There were a number of suggestions made but none thought of our unique flora which sadly is becoming more threatened every day. My answer was to plant seedlings of *Hakea kippistiana* and *strumosa*. A bit risky you may consider being in the middle of summer. However in Colac we quite often have one or two hot days and then a period of much cooler days, so if I plant just after a hot period I may have four or five days before another hot period. I remember the late Fred Rogers living in the Wimmera saying he planted his *Banksia* seedlings in February as this allowed them to get a good start before winter.

The weather here has been very dry, in fact the driest on record. Hardly a shower in the period November to late January, so I have had to revert to the hose to ensure all our young plants have made it through. The warmth plus moisture has made them grow probably faster than normal but as long as their roots are going down to stabilise them against the strong winds then I have nothing to complain about.

Our garden.

It is now eighteen months since we moved in and in that time we have been busy creating beds to grow native plants. Despite the dryer than normal weather pattern the one acre block is now starting to look clothed in green shrubs and the arrival of more bird species indicates that food and shelter is available to their liking. *Hakea multilineata* and *francisiana* have reached 2m in height and hopefully will flower this winter. The *Hakea* genus has risen to 125 species in the ground with another 10 in tubes that are too small to plant out. I have just put seed of another 12 species down so that leaves me with less than 20 to have the collection established here. I am looking forward to being able to do further research on *Hakea* species.

One of the reactions to the dry weather was that the broad leaf *Hakeas* of about one year old started to put out new growth in October which then remained stagnant. I was puzzled by this phenomena as I had not experienced it before. It was not until I gave them a good soaking just before Christmas that all of a sudden the clusters of small leaves shot out and normal appearance of new growth continued. This problem had not appeared at Strathmerton probably because watering was much more regular with smaller plants up there as the dry period began earlier. We sometimes forget that sandy soil in particular can dry out when it does not rain for some time, and when the plants are young their root system has not gone down deep enough to source moisture. The last thing we want to happen is to stress our plants out.

I expect a lot more *Hakea* species will flower this year, however *microcarpa* has already flowered a number of times.

News from members.

For most members the past four months has been far from normal. The NSW and Qld. coast have had more than its fair share of rain whereas for the remainder of Australia it has been extremely dry and hot. It was good news to see some rain in outback Queensland where the Hakea species out there had been in drought for many years.

Phil and Catriona Trickett from Milton, south of Wollongong have received 256mm of rain in January. Most of their Hakeas have survived but a Hakea neurophylla did not. Phil does a lot of grafting of Hakeas onto salicifolia or eriantha to enable them to survive these wet periods.

I was asked to give a more definitive statement on the differences between Hakea anadenia and Hakea oligoneura. The latter by its name refers to the fact that there is no cross venation between the three longitudinal veins and has less than five teeth on each of the margins. Hakea oligoneura comes from the coastal Yalgorup NP south of Perth which was badly burnt in the recent fires. It was classed as endangered then, so I hope some populations did survive.

Hakea anadenia comes from the Eneabba area and grows in more acid soils. It has cross venation between the three longitudinal veins and more than five teeth on each margin. Both should be grown because they are small shrubs and tend to be dense which is ideal for small birds. In both cases the flowers are white.

Seedbank.

One of the tasks I got down to doing was go through all my packets of seed, not only Hakea but many other genera too and sought out what I should retain and what I should offer as give aways at local group meetings etc. Over the years we tend to accumulate seed and never get to propagating it or giving it away because we do not have the room to grow it in our own gardens.

Seed is now becoming quite expensive to buy and if you buy it in 1gm lots you do not receive more than five seeds in most cases.

There has been some seed of Hakea chromatropa undergone propagation trials. So far only a small percentage has germinated which suggests that the seed may have limited viability. The other reason could be it requires certain climatic conditions to germinate or perhaps we should soak the seeds in smoked water before trying to germinate. I still believe that growing it from cuttings is the way to go. I have suggested that the ungerminated seed be given a dose of smoked water and then left in a potting mix out in a shady location to see if it germinates later in the year.

Finance statement	
Balance forward 31st. Oct. 2015	3469-84
Income	
Membership subscriptions	90-00
Expenditure	
Printing and postage of newsletter No. 59	87-44
Purchase of seed	26-30
Balance forward 22 nd . Feb. 2016	3446-10

Hakea Crawl.

The Hakea crawl in WA is set down for the weekend of 3rd and 4th of September, 2016. If you wish to join the Western Australian Hakea SG members please let me know. We will be looking at the Hakeas in the area bounded by Kulin, Lake Grace and the western end of the Fitzgerald NP. I will not be rushing home after it so there is a good chance to do

further botanising along the coast to Albany if you want to.

The ulicina group continued.

In the last newsletter we looked at the species which could be identified by the angles or indentations in the cross section of the leaves. In this newsletter we will look at the species which have broad to narrow leaves such as *marginata*, *stenocarpa*, *erecta*, *ridiga* and the two forms of *cygna*. There are others in this group with broad to sometimes terete leaves such as *aenigma*, *repullulens*, *ulicina*, *mittchellii* and *carinata* which were dealt with in Newsletter No. 51. To examine species in the wild or in your garden it is wise to have a magnifying glass with you.

Hakea marginata.

This species extends from the Eneabba area, through the Jarrah forests of the Darling escarpment and along the coast towards Esperance. It is easily recognizable by its elliptic shaped leaves and central horizontal yellow vein in the leaf.

It is a shrub to 2m high with leaves that are twisted at the base, stiff, elliptic to obovate, 2-5cm long and 4 to 8mm wide, margin and mid veins prominent, cross venation obscure. Flowers axillary, white and numerous. Seed capsule is narrowly ovate ending in a short point. There is some thought that the northern forms have narrower fruit and is possibility a resprouter, whereas the southern forms have broader fruit and are apparently killed by fire. We will try to have a look at this aspect on the *Hakea* crawl.

Hakea stenocarpa.

A shrub to 1m high. This species can be quite deceiving in that the flexible leaves twisted at base can be upright, spirally twisted or curled along its length. The leaves being 6-11cm long and 2-7mm wide. The marginal veins are prominent but also the mid vein prominent above and below. The seed capsule is sessile and obliquely narrowly ovate, 2.8-3.0cm long x 0.6-0.8cm wide with a long tapering point. It can be found growing in sandy soils from Jurien Bay down to Busselton. The plants I grew at Strathmerton and Elliminyt had the more upright leaves, so I never had the chance to show off a spirally twisted one. The seedlings that I have grown have produced large juvenile leaves, up to 20cm long and 2 cm wide, which had me concerned that I had got my seed mixed up, however the leaves now shooting out are more the shape described above.

Hakea erecta.

This species extends over a large area from Eneabba across the northern sandplains to Kalgoorlie and down to Ravensthorpe. The leaves are erect, flat and twisted at base and linear 4 to 10 cm long by 2.5 to 5 cm wide. The marginal veins are prominent and the longitudinal veins one (rarely 3) above and three below. Flowers pink or white and the seed capsule ovate- elliptic with a short point, 1.2-3.0 cm long x 9-14mm wide. The pink flowered form of *erecta* is very pretty. Plants can grow to over 2m in height, so allow a bit of room to develop its potential.

Hakea cygna ssp. *cygna*.

This species can be deceiving in that the size of the leaves varies with the amount of moisture. Hence plants in the lower rainfall areas have smaller leaves. The leaves are flat, thick and narrowly obovate to linear, 2 to 7.5 cm long and 2.5 to 9 mm wide. The marginal

veins are prominent, longitudinal veins 1-3 obscure above and faintly visible below. Flowers cream to white. The seed capsule is obliquely ovate elliptic 2.1 to 3.7cm long, 1.2 to 2cm wide with a small beak. The seed capsule is shaped like a baby swan, hence the name cygna. It occurs in the Three Springs- Wongan Hills area and across a wide area of the southern wheat belt in sandy loam soils.

Hakea cygna ssp *needlei*.

In this species the mature leaves are terete or trigonous, up to 7.5cm long but only 1.2 to 2mm wide. The seed capsule is the same as ssp. *cygna*. Plants of this species grown in the garden initially have broad leaves like ssp. *cygna* and it is only as the plant becomes larger that the terete leaves appear. In the wild I have never come across seedlings and this is of concern to me as the existing populations may need to be burnt to stimulate new plants. It grows in a small area south of Lake King.

Hakea ridiga.

I have seen this species growing in sandy loam soils out near Warrachuppin in the central wheat belt. Whilst it can grow up to 3m tall in our gardens it tends to be a smaller erect shrub. Leaves terete to almost flat, pentagonal in cross section with longitudinal veins, 5 all round at angles. In the almost flat leaves, shape is concave with 5 prominent longitudinal veins, 2 marginal and 3 on underside. Venation on upper side is obscure. The flowers are a bright pink. The seed capsule is obovate - elliptic 2 to 2.2 cm long and 1 to 1.2 cm wide ending in a tapered point.

This species is declared threatened and is only known from a small number of populations growing in sandy soils. It flowers in September- October and perhaps that is the time we should be out there looking at the existing populations and trying to find new ones. It is a great plant for our gardens and needs to be brought more into cultivation.

Rain finally came falling down in the last weekend in January with 32mm recorded. The plants welcomed it and look very contented at present. This summer the *Grevillea* looper caterpillar has mostly been absent and so the new growth has been able to shoot uneaten. I hope you have kept a look out for this pest as it can defoliate new growth very quickly. In the next two months I hope to have a look at the alpine and lower southern NSW *Hakeas*. It has been a long time since I have been in the alpine areas, where in my younger days I did a lot of bush walking. The long range forecast is for a better rainfall in the southern parts of South Australia and Victoria during the autumn and winter, so it will be good for our gardens.

I have included some photos of emerging stunted growth which I believe was due to lack of moisture on *Hakea petiolaris* ssp. *trichophylla* and *stenocarpa*. Also photos on my travels of *Hakea trineura* and *macrocarpa*. Photos from your garden or from the wild of *Hakeas* are always welcome.

Now is a good time to think about propagating *Hakeas* from seed and cuttings. The days will not be as hot and the nights still warm. The saucer method is ideal in cases where you are looking to germinate a few plants of each species.

The next newsletter will be sent to you in June, by then the weather will have become a lot cooler. Make sure your *Hakeas* that are susceptible to frost damage are protected. I wish you success with your endeavours in growing *Hakeas*. Cheers, Paul.



Hakea stenocarpa



H. macrocarpa



H. trineura



H. petiolaris ssp. *trichophylla*