

AUSTRALIAN NATIVE PLANTS SOCIETY AUSTRALIA

HAKEA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER No. 64

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Dear members.

Winter is about to arrive and hopefully we have prepared our gardens for the cold wet weather to come in the southern parts of Australia. My observations are that most Hakeas do not like wet feet and hence if we can improve the drainage and raise our garden beds, then we will have given them a good chance to survive any major rainfall event. I have continued to build raised up beds and deepen drainage lines so that water can get away.

Tasmanian trip.

At the end of March Barbara and I made a quick trip across to Tasmania to do some sight seeing comprising the Great Lakes area, Mount Field NP, Lake Gordon World Heritage area, the coastal area south west of Hobart and the West Coast. We also caught up with some of our friends in the Hobart area. I kept an eye out for Hakeas along the roadside and saw plenty of *H. epiglottis* and *lissosperma*. The *epiglottis* forms I have growing here tend to be narrow and upright with the leaves also longer and upright than the forms I came across in Tasmania, which tended to be shrubby plants with short and thicker leaves. Perhaps the rocky soil and climate has something to do with this.

Hakea lissosperma is quite extensive starting lower down the mountains and continuing across the Great Lakes area to Mount Field NP. I have also come across it at the base of Ben Lomond on a previous trip. It tends to be an upright plant with stiff terete greyish green foliage and extremely hardy to cold conditions. In the Victorian and NSW Alps it is not very common and grows at a much higher altitude. It will be interesting to see whether the Tasmanian form germinates much easier than the seed of mainland plants.

Other Hakeas listed occurring in Tasmania are *H. decurrens* ssp. *physocarpa* (probably Stoney Cape NP), *decurrens* ssp. *platyaena* (Flinders Island), *microcarpa* (central portion of Tasmania), *nodosa*, (northern part of east coast), *epiglottis* ssp. *milliganii* (west coast), *teretifolia* ssp. *hirsuta* (east coast) and *megadenia* (central to lower east coast). Dick Burns in his travels across Tasmania looking at the flora may have come across these species elsewhere too.

Propagation.

After a good fall of rain in mid April I intend to plant another thirty species in early May to bring the collection to 160 species out of a possible 169. The seed that I germinated in December was potted on in January and hardened off in April. I had very few losses in the potting on stage and kept a close watch to see that the *Grevillea* looper caterpillar did not appear.

With the ground still warm the seedlings when planted out at about a height of 100 to 200mm seem to grow rapidly rather than left in pots till spring. I put a green plastic cover around them to give them some protection.

With the arrival of some new seed in April, I used the saucer method to germinate these

and kept them inside at night to keep the night time temperature up. I have had the joy of germinating *Hakea chordophylla* and *megalosperma*, the seed of which is very hard to obtain.

Letters from members.

Hans Griesser.

The unusually wet conditions- rain twice even in January – have made gardening so much easier for me over the year. Over the Christmas break I planted out about ten hakeas that were 20-30cm tall and I haven't had to water any of them. The only Hakea I water occasionally is *Hakea archaeoides* which I planted out in early spring and it is growing faster than any Hakea I have ever had, it is already a metre high and looking fantastic with its bronze new tip growth. The challenge might be to get it through next winter's frosts but if it gets tall enough, it might be beyond the reach of frost.

My *Hakea maconochieana* must have got wind of the e mail I wrote to you, saying that I might rip it up because it had been doing very little growth over a couple of years. This summer it has tried to justify its place and thus earn a reprieve, by doing some growing, but nowhere near how other Hakeas do but a step in the right direction.

Of the Hakea seeds you sent me when I visited, *Hakea grammatophylla* gave me the great germination with 2 out of 2, but *Hakea trineura* gave me none out of two. Maybe the wrong time of the year, I will try again in the autumn.

I have a whole lot of various Hakea seedlings that I germinated in October and they are coming along well. Most might be ready for planting out in late autumn, except for a few that I might hold back in pots over winter if they could be sensitive to frosts. Ivan Holliday's book is a useful guide, but for some Hakeas it does not mention how well they cope with frost. I have two pots of *Hakea eyreana* but cannot find any information as to how that species copes with frost. Perhaps someone in the Study Group might know?

A source of enjoyment and beauty are the visits by yellow-tailed cockatoos on my Hakeas. The visits are getting more frequent - word must have got around as more Hakeas are producing nuts. They love the locals (*Hakea rostrata*, *Hakea carinata*) of course, but are also avidly tucking into *Hakea salicifolia*, *mitchelli*, *petiolaris*, *dohertyi*, *florida* and others. They nip off twigs to get at nuts but I'm OK with that, it's free pruning to make the plants more bushy, and we are having a good laugh at the bite marks as they try nuts too large for them to crack - *Hakea pandanicarpa* (both ssp.) and *Hakea constablei* being prime examples.

Editor's comments. Hans lives near Gawler in the Adelaide hills where the rainfall is about 750mm. He grows the Hakeas on a sloping site in loamy soil. *Hakea maconochieana* has a lignotuber and has probably been establishing that before putting on a great deal of growth. It is a long lived plant from the rocky Ambathala Range east of Quilpie in Queensland where summers are very hot and rainfall unpredictable. Would have been in drought conditions recently.

I grade frost into three categories, down to -1 as a light frost, down to -4 as a medium frost and below that as a heavy frost. *Hakea eyreana* would probably survive quite well in light frosts but beyond that frost protection would be required if planted out now. Cold winds can also increase the cold temperature factor which can also affect plants. Plastic guards can help and also keep other pests such as rabbits from eating them.

I have black cockatoos here but so far have left the Hakeas alone. I remember Geoff Cooke's place at Wiseleigh in Gippsland where his hedge of *Hakea salicifolia* was pruned regularly, leaving Geoff to rake up the debris. I will try germinating *Hakea trineura* for Hans in Spring.

Una Graff.

Una who lives near Gilgandra says last winter was extremely wet. She lost a *Hakea platysperma* which was growing on sand over clay. The white clay is almost water proof so prevents water draining away when the sand gets saturated. *Hakea mitchelli* and *newbeyana* flowered well as did many others in the springtime. She is considering doing some pruning once the *Hakeas* have flowered prior to summer.

Patrick Laher.

It has been one of the hottest summers on record at Uralla on the New England tablelands. Fortunately they had two good falls of rain to keep the native plants alive, 125mm in January and 75mm in February.

Phil Trickett.

The summer had been extremely hot but not as bad as Sydney. In early February the temperature reached 43 degrees C on one day, however the rainfall for February was 75mm, which meant most plants had access to moisture in the soil despite the heat.

The March rainfall was 485mm at the time of writing and it was still raining. The *Hakeas* are still looking good despite the wet soil.

Editor's comments. Phil is on a ridge so most of the water gets away quickly, however Phil has also to contend with winds often above 100 km/hr. He and Catriona have a magnificent garden but a lot of effort has to be put into drainage and keeping plants upright. They have built up beds of sandy loam over loamy soil and clay.

On my next visit I must list the *Hakeas* they are growing for the benefit of members living in higher rainfall areas.

Neil Marriott's *Hakea* collection.

I spoke to the APS Grampians Group in March and took the opportunity to look at Neil and Wendy Marriott's ever expanding *Hakea* collection, which probably totals about 100 species. The garden noted for its *Grevillea* collection also has a lot of other interesting native plants. The soil is granitic and drains very well. However the climate has hot summers with low summer rainfall, which means a lot of watering needs to be done until the plants are well established. Some of the *Hakea* species are quite old. I spent a couple of hours with Neil verifying species names.

Across the road from Neil and Wendy's is the former property of Grant Mattingly. I am told there are some magnificent specimens of *Hakea horrida* etc. growing there that are over thirty years old. I must get back and make some time to look at both properties again.

Tony and Ann Crawford's garden.

The Crawford garden is located south west of Hobart with a delightful outlook to the coast. It is situated on a sloping hillside facing north west. The soil is loamy and drains very well. Tony describes it about one metre deep derived from partly dolerite and mudstone and says it is not sandy or clay!! Tony showed me all his *Hakea* plants, which totalled some 64 species. He is keen to add to their collection. Again some of their *Hakeas* are quite old. There was a 3m high plant of *Hakea macrocarpa*, which had been in the garden for more than twenty years, the centre was dying out but the outer branches had shed copious amount of seed. Other old plants were a 2.5m high *H. preissii*, a 2.5m x 2.5m plant of *Hakea epiglottis* ssp. *epiglottis*, which flowers well but appears to set no seed. In the western corner of their property was a large *Hakea megadenia* in flower. Again despite the thousands of flowers in previous years it had set no seed. On the east side of the house was a large

plant of *Hakea varia*, more spreading than upright but interesting because it comes from Western Australia but does very well here.

I had not seen *Hakea archaeoides* with seed, however the one in the Crawford garden has grown to 2.5m high and was very healthy and obviously flowered prior to late summer. Tasmania's cooler climate does not appear to have limited what *Hakea* species that can be grown apart from the tropical species.

Welcome to new members.

We welcome Peter Knight and Tony Molyneux as members of the *Hakea* Study Group. Tony teaches biology and agricultural science and his interests are in insects and what species visit *Hakeas*. I feel he will be a great help to our study on what pollinates *Hakeas* species.

Financial statement.

Balance forward 28 th . Feb. 2017		\$3389-32
Income. Membership subs.	\$20-00	
Expenditure		
Newsletter No. 63 print and post.	111-14	
Seed packaging and postage	14-45	
Balance 30 th . April 2017		\$3283-73

Distribution of *Hakea asperma*

I have commenced distribution of *Hakea asperma* plants to members. I am confident most will do very well in members' gardens where the summers are not too hot and dry. The first one I planted in our garden in October has already tripled its height and is looking very healthy.

Seed bank.

Thanks to Tom Constant, Jennifer Young, Victoria Tanner, Alex George, Geoff Beilby and Una Graff for sending seed to me. The seed bank has quite a large number of species available and I am grateful for members making use of it. Alex has sent me more seed of *Hakea chromatropa* so please keep your requests coming in.

Membership dues.

In recent years many members have taken out membership to cover a number of years and hence made it a lot easier in having to send out lesser numbers of renewal notices. Again I will send out renewal notices separate to the newsletter. I hope all will continue as members.

The days have been relatively warm, so I have made the most of the good conditions to create another raised bed and to get the drainage from wet areas fixed up prior to winter. My *Hakea* seedlings are now looking ready to go in the ground so I will enjoy planting them and watching them grow. We only had one light frost here last year, so I am hoping it stays that way. Nevertheless I will put plastic guards around them to give them a bit of extra protection from cold winds.

Hakea nodosa has started to flower, it caught me off guard as the flower buds are so small I do not see them forming. I noted on Facebook that *Hakea petiolaris* and *Hakea laurina* are starting to flower in various parts of Australia, so the *Hakea* flowering season is underway.

In the meantime happy gardening with *Hakeas*.

Cheers,
Paul



a scene of the Western Tiers in Tasmania



Hakea megadenia in flower



Hakea epiglottis ssp *epiglottis* at
Tony and Ann Crawford's garden



Hakea lissosperma