

AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY AUSTRALIA

HAKEA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER No. 67

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Leader: Paul Kennedy  
210 Aireys Street  
Elliminyt Vic. 3250  
E mail [hakeaholic@gmail.com](mailto:hakeaholic@gmail.com)  
Tel. 03-52315569

Dear members.

In corresponding with members the message coming through is that this summer has been a particularly difficult one for keeping plants alive due to hot days and lack of rain.

Here in Elliminyt (a suburb of Colac) the warm weather finally gave way to a cold rainy day on the 14th. of April. It had been a long hot summer with no rain till the end of March. I had unfortunately to water the smaller Hakeas regularly as the subsoil had dried out and I did not want to lose any. However, I did lose three Hakea plants which were well established, the broad-leaf form of *Hakea multilineata*, *Hakea sericea* and *Hakea lissosperma*. *Hakea sericea* seems to prefer dappled shade and constant soil moisture conditions, not liking to dry out. *Hakea lissosperma* grows very well in Tasmania above 600m in altitude in rocky situations and high rainfall. On the mainland in southern mountain alpine areas I am told it prefers to grow near moist areas. I have seen it growing on Mount Buffalo near Lake Catani and on top of the Eagles Peaks below Mount Buller where there was no moist areas. I have come to the conclusion to grow it in our gardens it needs to be in a shady location and have access to moisture.

As well we also had days of strong winds where the gusts reached 100 klm./hr. The Hakeas planted back in the previous winter had now outgrown the green plastic covers and were prone to be blown over unless staked. I cut up some thin galvanised steel bracing and drove it into the ground near the plant. I then put loose ties from stake to plant so that some movement could occur. As plants become more established I will remove the ties.

In late March species such as *H. multilineata*, *bucculenta* and *petiolaris* began to put out new buds in the leaf axis. The fatter ones will be flowers and the remainder new leaf growth. It is fascinating to watch the bud development.

I was surprised by the early flowering of *Hakea bicornata*, one that comes from north east of Esperance. It is seldom seen in gardens but is a lovely bushy green plant with erect terete leaves with a sharp muncro. It flowered at the same time as *laurina* and *petiolaris*.

### **Propagation.**

In December of 2016 I had sown seed of over 70 Hakea species in vermiculite just on Christmas and kept moist. The germination rate was excellent. Last year with the days getting above 25 degrees C I decided to start germinating Hakea seed at the beginning of December and had very poor results. Part of it was that the nights still remained cool and hence did not trigger the germination process. Eventually most germinated but I had to wait with some species till March/April for it to happen. When the really cold weather arrived in early May the first seedling of *Hakea lissosperma* appeared. The seeds had been in the refrigerator for

six weeks beforehand but still waited for the temperature to drop. Bottom heat probably would have helped those put in December.

In contrast those I put on moist paper towel on a saucer inside a plastic bag and kept inside germinated quite readily provided the seed was fertile.

#### **Frosts.**

By the time you receive this newsletter the cold weather will have arrived. Many of the Hakeas are quite frost tolerant; however, those from the warm temperate- tropical climate will require protection. Also some from the southern coastal areas too. One that will need protection will be *Hakea clavata* as its fleshy leaves have little resistance to frost.

#### **WA Hakea Excursion, October 2018**

I am happy to report that there has been a great response to the excursion to the Albany area of Western Australia on the 6<sup>th</sup>. and 7<sup>th</sup>. of October. The proposed arrangements are to meet in Albany (I will confirm location later) at 9.00am on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup>. and then proceed out to Sandwood Road where we will spend the day looking at some 24 species of Hakea. On the Sunday we will go into the Cheyne beach area and look at the Hakeas growing around the coastal area and how wind affects their growing habit. On return to Albany it time permits we will look at *Hakea elliptica* and *linearis*. On the Monday as we leave to go home, those who have time to still wander we will look at *H. ceratophylla*, *falcata* and *florida* on a route towards Denmark and then up to Mount Barker. Before I arrive in Albany I will spend a few days looking at Hakeas in the Corrigan - Kulin area to do some more Hakea identification for local Wildflower Society people. It will be a busy time botanising, renewing friendships and enjoying great scenery. I hope the weather is good for us as per previous excursions.

#### **Financial.**

|                                       |       |         |
|---------------------------------------|-------|---------|
| Balance forward                       |       | 3281-58 |
| Income. Subscriptions                 | 30-00 |         |
| Expenditure                           |       |         |
| Newsletter No.66 printing and postage | 75-78 |         |
| Balance 30 <sup>th</sup> . May        |       | 3235-80 |

We welcome Gail Knight from Canberra as a new member. Gail is looking forward to growing Hakeas.

#### **Letters from members.**

Brendon Stahl's garden in Colac is not far from mine but the sandy soil is much shallower. The clay soil underneath can be quite wet in winter and hence drains filled with aggregate have been constructed to remove water out to street drains. *Hakea cucullata* has flowered and set seed.

Graeme and Denise Krake's garden at Brogo has had some pruning and replanting done as not all Hakeas do well due to climate and keeping deer and wallabies out as they front onto bushland. They have included a list of Hakeas that have not set seed and query if there is a reason for this. The non seed setting species have been *ambigua*, *amplexicaulis*, *baxteri*, *brownii*, *commutata*, *corymbosa*, *cristata*, *drupacea*, *elliptica*, *eneabba*, *florida*, *hookeriana*, *megadenia*, *pendens*, *pritzillii*, *recurva* ssp *recurva*, *rugosa*, *stenocarpa*, *strumosa*, and *tuberculata*.

It was put to me recently that plants put out more flower than is necessary for seed formation to provide nectar for insects and birds.

This might go some way to explain why some Hakeas are terribly flowery and yet set very little or no seed. Other reasons could be that they have a lignotuber and if damaged or burnt can regenerate from the base. However I believe there are many factors including climatic conditions and lack of a specific pollinator at the time of flowering. Over all the years of growing Hakeas, I have in some Hakeas species waited years for seed to be set, and then it may only occur thereafter in every third year or so. I have found the horrida group to be very tardy of wanting to flower. Hakea megadenia can have all male or female flowers or be bisexual and hence if you have a plant with male flowers, no seed will be set. Graeme and Denise have no shortage of bird species so the showy species are more likely to set seed. Of those listed only pendens and pritzellii have colours other than white or cream, which are more likely to be insect pollinated.

In my travels recently to northern Victoria I had the pleasure to look at Barry and Elva Teague's garden at Swan Hill. The soil consists of a shallow layer of brown sand over clay which is probably more alkaline than acid. Barry has brought in a large quantity of sand and constructed beds which are 0.5 to 1.00m high. Into these beds Barry has planted Hakeas, Grevilleas, Melaleucas and small Eucalypts, most of which are growing quite nicely. On the northern boundary they have planted tall Eucalypts which help to give shade to some of the raised beds in summer as the temperature in Swan Hill can hover near 40 degrees C on many days in summer. They keep their plants alive by giving them deep waterings, which encourages the roots to go deep into the ground. When we were at Strathmerton where the summer temperatures were a couple of degrees C lower than Swan Hill we grew all the Hakea species provided we planted as close to their soil type and gave protection to those that came from cooler climates. Barry and Elva have some 75 species of Hakea growing which is a terrific result. I am not going to list all of them but for benefit of our inland members I will list some that normally would not survive unless given special attention to shade and watering. These Hakeas are ambigua, baxteri, ceratophylla, drupacea, elliptica, flabellifolia, hookeriana, lasiantha, obtusa, sulcata, and victoriae.

In this newsletter I also want to discuss three of their un-named Hakeas and include photos. The first two photos show a Hakea flowering in early May. I believe this to be a cross between Hakea laurina and Hakea petiolaris ssp. trichophylla. The reason for this is the flowering time as petiolaris and laurina are in flower in May and both have a globular shaped flower. Also the leaf shape is similar to H. laurina with similar venation but has the greyer foliage of H. petiolaris. The seed capsule is not as fat as either of them but has a prominent point.

The third and fourth photos show a Hakea in the varia group. ie. oleifolia, florida, ilicifolia and horrida. Although the plant has been in the ground for many years it has not flowered and set seed which would have been useful in identification. I have noticed the varia group can either be very flowery or not at all. H. oleifolia usually has less prominent dentate protrusions on the leaf and hence my feeling is that it is closer to H. florida, which flowers in the October - December part of the year. At the other end, H. ilicifolia is a much more open rigid foliage. I have grown H. florida at Strathmerton but it would not flower, which I put down to the environment being much hotter and dryer, which is also the case at Swan Hill.

The fifth and sixth photos show a Hakea with much more prickly foliage. The foliage is very stiff, however it is not as dense as the pinnate foliage of Hakea horrida or has thicker and flatter leaves of

Hakea ilicifolia. The greener new growth in front is similar to H. ilicifolia but as it matures the leaves become narrower and more pointed. I believe this to be a cross between ilicifolia and horrida. Again not having seed capsules makes identification a bit more difficult.

**Melton/Bacchus Marsh plant sale.**

The blast of cold weather from the Arctic did not make it conducive for buyers to come out, however there were quite a few people present and the large collection of Hakeas for sale were mainly bought up. They produce well-established plants in 70mm square tubes which are ready to go in the ground. I bought a few of the uncommon species such as H. rhombales as I try to have at least two of these in the ground. Seed is not always available of these uncommon species.

In May I planted out another 20 Hakeas and still have another 8 to go to have 169 species in the ground. If I can obtain seed of the Cape York species then the Hakea collection will be complete. Considering where we live is classed as cold temperate it has required some position planting up against brick walls of the warmer climate species. However it also says something about the hardiness and adaptability of Hakeas to climate and soils. I hope the winter months are not too harsh on your garden and you enjoy seeing plenty of Hakeas in flower. Cheers, Paul.



