

AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY AUSTRALIA

HAKEA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER No. 75

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Dear members,

How things can change in twelve months. This time last year we were experiencing bushfires in the eastern states and very dry conditions. Fortunately the rains did eventually come and the blackened and dry landscape is now changed to green. Here in Elliminyt we did not really experience really dry conditions and in the second half of the year it has rained constantly so that our yearly rainfall was about 750mm. The garden has responded with a lot of growth and in places it is like a jungle with plants intertwined together. I am not a good pruner or getting at it soon enough and so my visitors say it is probably better to let the situation remain as it does not overall look out of place. I suppose this is often the case in the wild although over time fire and wind etc. does play its part.

The mild and wet conditions have continued right into summer and I have continued to plant Hakea seedlings out up to the end of the year as they seem to do better in the ground. I usually put wire cages around them, which allows me to place some shade cloth over them if we get a really hot day. They do need constant watering initially but the growth rate in the warmer months is good to see as they are then well established before the colder weather arrives. The northern species in particular do need to be planted out in summer as this is the time when rains occur in their environment.

I am particularly grateful to North Queensland members who have provided me with seed of *trineura*, *benthamii* (*plurinervia*), *arborescens* and *persiehana*. In their gardens these plants grow very well in tropical to sub tropical conditions. However at Elliminyt it will be a challenge to keep them going over winter. A four year old Hakea *plurinervia* has grown quite well, flowered and is now setting seed, so there is hope of success for the others.

Why limbs die.

From time to time I come across small branches that die on healthy plants for no apparent reason. The dieback extends down to where the small branch meets a larger one. The cause could be due to insect attack, fungal attack, borers or something else that I have not observed. To prevent more damage I cut these off below the dieback and everything seems to be satisfactory after that. I have also lost a few from borer attack at the base of the plant. Often you see no evidence until the wind blows the plant over and on examining the base you find it has been hollowed out.

The former garden of the late Ian Mitchell.

On a wet day in November with Neil and Wendy Marriott I had the pleasure of looking at the bush block of the late Ian Mitchell near Stawell in Victoria. I had known Ian from earlier days when he came along to Maroondah Group meetings at Ringwood and would speak about their bush block. The block is open forest in granite country and Ian and his wife would plant Hakeas etc. in amongst the trees and water sparingly in the initial years of their growth. Nearly fifty years on many of these early plantings are still surviving and are now very large bushes. We do not have many records of ages of Hakea plants and their life span. We came across large plants of Hakea horrida, corymbosa, ilicifolia, decurrens, francisiana, lasiocarpa, nitida, purpurea, varia and verrucosa. The H purpureas had finished flowering but Neil and Wendy had seen them in full flower and were in awe of the brilliant red flowers. Ian had also planted quite a few colour forms of H francisiana and these were in flower but the wet conditions stopped us from making closer observations. When I return to Stawell I hope to have another look in hopefully sunny weather.

News from members.

Una Gaff from Gilgandra in central NSW writes about her efforts in growing Hakeas on shallow sandy soils overlying much heavier clay and gravelly soils. In the past few years they have been in a terrible drought and Una in an effort to keep plants alive would build a low circular wall about 3m in diameter around the base of the plant and fill this up with water perhaps once every four months to give the plant a deep watering. The forest areas nearby are mainly covered in Cypress pine and Piliga scrub which is extremely drought resistant.

Hakea laurina. A hardy plant which produced a few flowers but has a lot of buds appearing for 2021.

Hakea petiolaris ssp trichophylla. Very few flowers in 2020 and not showing any buds yet for 2021.

Hakea purpurea. All three flowered magnificently. (they come from a similar climate and soils in south west Queensland -Editor)

Hakea tephrosperma. She had never known it to flower so well and is covered in seeds. A local Hakea.

Hakea Burrendong Beauty. Did not flower very well at all.

Hakea bucculenta. The red flowers were beautiful but flowered a bit later than usual.

Hakea divaricata. Responded to the first rains and flowered quite well, but it is a desert plant.

Hakea eyreana. Was its usual beautiful self but has not set much seed.

Hakea francisiana. The red form flowered well, however the cream form was very disappointing as it only produced a few miserable flowers. It is growing beside the others, so I do not understand why it does not flower better.

Hakea leucoptera ssp leucoptera. Beautiful as usual with its masses of creamy white flowers.

Hakea mitchellii. Looked like it was going to flower but in the end it did not. We had a hot dry spell just when it started to flower. Has grown considerably.

Hakea multilineata. Flowered well and has a lot of new buds appearing.

Hakea newbeyana. Was a ball of yellow flowers, it could have been a wattle seen from a distance.

Hakea scoparia. Flowered quite well but I feel is in too much shade.

Hakeas that did not flower. Lorea, the three plants showed no sign of flowering regardless of the season. Also orthorrhyncha, pandanicarpa, platysperma and psilorrhyncha.

Hakea strumosa. This species did not survive the drought.

During the winter Una gathered up all the Hakea seeds she had collected over 25 years and put them into seedling trays filled with local sandy soil. The germination rate was very good and potting on into tubes has begun.

Thanks Una, I always enjoy having a look at your Hakeas and helping you identify any you are not sure of. Other Hakeas from south west Queensland such as collina, ivoryi, cchordophylla and

maconochieana should also like your conditions because of similar climate and probably slightly alkaline soils.(Editor)

Neil and Wendy Marriott's Hakeas.

Because of my wife's illness I have to do arrange respite care if I want to visit other members and this can take a bit of organizing. However in November I spent an afternoon and morning with Neil and Wendy looking at their Hakea collection of some 120 species. The soil is basically deep granitic sand with a rainfall of about 600mm in a good year, but of late it has been considerably less despite them being on a high range overlooking the Grampians near Stawell.

I have been impressed with their enthusiasm and in a matter of four years they now have plants flowering and setting seed. Despite the dryer conditions plants have grown quite rapidly, so they must be getting their roots down to where there is moisture. When we were growing Hakeas at Strathmerton on deep sand we discovered at about 1.5m down the soil was quite moist due to the capillary action of the sand. Their garden, which also has the Grevillea collection and many other native species, is a delight to visit. Previously they had grown some Hakea species such as francisiana, maconochieana and pendens and most of these are still alive. Neil and Wendy plant the more frost sensitive plants up against granite boulders as they radiate heat which had been absorbed by the day's sunshine. The plan is to grow all the Hakea species here in a warmer summer climate and complement my collection at Elliminyt. They are germinating more species over summer with the intention of an autumn planting.

Propagating.

In early November I put seed down of ivoryi, stenophylla, loranthifolia, collina, maconochieana, chordophylla, circumalata, obliqua ssp obliqua, constablei, hastata, pendens, bucculenta, teretifolia from the Grampians, and bakeriana. Most of these germinated quickly by the saucer method and after potting on into tubes, they were planted out in late December when still only 50mm to 100mm high. However their roots had already reached the bottom of the tube. I then followed up with another lot of seed of persiehana, arborescens, denticulata, lehmanniana, incrassata, gibbosa and cyclocarpa in early January 2021 and will pot them on as they germinate.

We are fortunate to have three members who are very good at grafting. I have given Ian Evans some Hakea rhombales seedlings to graft onto Grevillea robusta root stock. It is a plant from the Canning stock route and probably not very cold tolerant or tolerant of wet feet. There are a number of others that I plan to have grafted to try and increase their climate tolerance and introduce to members gardens because of their rarity. These include aculeata, acuminata, aenigma, asperma, cygna ssp needlei, fraseri, hastata, ivoryi, macrocarpa, megalosperma, pedunculata, pulvinifera, stanleyensis and maconochieana. If anyone is travelling through Alice Springs and beyond later in the year could they please contact me as I require seed of Hakea macrocarpa from a private property. Chris Nicholic from the Lockyer Valley in Queensland, where summers are hot, humid and wet, has successfully grafted Hakeas bicornata, drupacea, obtusa, francisiana, bucculenta, ulicina, megalosperma, clavata, trineura, neurophylla, nodosa, salicifolia, archaeiodes, varia, horrida, lehmanniana, grammatophylla, hookeriana, oleifolia, cinerea, Burrendong Beauty, ilicifolia, multilineata and denticulata.

The third member who also does grafting of Hakeas but puts most of his efforts into Banksias is Phil Trickett. Between them I hope we can make a big step forward in bringing the rarer ones into cultivation. I will also continue to trial cutting material as well.

Seed Bank.

I thank members who have sent me seed recently. I also added some from my own garden, so there is quite a lot of Hakea species available.

Financial statement.

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|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Balance forward | \$3585-44 |
| Income. | |
| Subscriptions | 375-00 |
| Expenditure. | |
| Newsletter No.74 print and post | 56-45 |
| Seedbank costs Nil. | |
| Balance as of 31st. January, 2021. | \$3903-99 |

A very big thankyou to all members who responded to notification that their subscriptions were due.

Hakea crawl.

The coronavirus is still a big problem as State Premiers close borders very quickly if an outbreak occurs in another State. However I hope that things will settle down as people are immunized. I have at this stage brought the date forward to early September as the ANPSA bi-annual Conference has been put back a year. The program is still to start down at Bremer Bay and work our way across to the eastern end of the Stirlings over a period of about three days in the week beginning the 5th. of September. I will be in touch with those who have indicated they are coming in March.

Flowering times.

One of the observations I have undertaken is to observe when Hakea species flower. Jennifer Young's book on Hakeas of WA and Flora of Australia, volume 17B give flowering times and I have found that Hakeas flower within the time frame given. Climate and soil variations will probably affect the plant growth and to what degree they flower. However in a very dry year the Hakeas may not flower at all or with very few flowers. Some, such as Hakea francisiana, have a very long period in which to flower and this could be related to climatic conditions. It is a handy reference when you come across plants in the wild or garden where leaves maybe similar.

Hakea book.

I am continuing on the descriptions of each species and have progressed up to those which start with "P". It is a time consuming process, so I will be at it for the rest of this year.

Photos on the first page are from my garden at Elliminyt, Victoria taken by Geoff Lay, of Hakeas linearis, leucoptera ssp. sericipes and laevipes ssp laevipes. On the second photos page are specimens of Hakea horrida. One is of a very old plant of (40 years +) in the former property of the late Ian Mitchell, taken by Neil Marriott. The others, for comparison, show a much younger and taller specimen growing in Hans Griesser's garden at Gumeracha in South Australia, flowering profusely last September. I thank Hans who puts the text and photos together and sends out the e mail copies to members. He makes my task as Study Group leader so much easier.

As I write this newsletter we are having a cold spell and the temperature is just 15 degrees C and very windy. To date in January we have had over 100mm of rain, so summer so far has been very cool and wet. The summer flowering Hakeas have just about finished on linearis, leucoptera and kippistiana. Hakea scoparia ssp tricycherica from the Mount Ragged area of WA is budding up and will be the first to herald in the new flowering season. I must get back to the pruning and try to remove some of this rapid growth the Hakeas have put on without making them look ugly.

Cheers, Paul.



Hakea leucoptera subsp. sericipes



Hakea laevipes subsp. laevipes



Hakea linearis



Hakea horrida (all)

