

AUSTRALIAN NATIVE PLANTS SOCIETY (AUSTRALIA)

HAKEA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER No. 79

June 2022

ISSN0727-7008

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Dear members.

Winter has arrived here after a very dry summer and autumn. In fact some are saying that it is the driest first five months of the year on record. The ground is certainly dry but in the main the Hakeas have stood up to the conditions very well. The temperature too has been in the low 20 degrees C range for most of the autumn. In the last few days of May the temperature has dropped remarkably and we have had a couple of very light frosts which I hope does not signal a very cold winter. When the rain does come I hope it does not continue in bucketfuls for the remainder of the winter and spring as it did last year, saturating the ground.

The east coast of Australia has had exceptional rains over the past five months and the local Hakeas, if not in well drained locations, would have suffered sitting in saturated soils.

My Hakea losses have been minimal, *dactyloides*, *sericea*, *propinqua* and an *obliqua* ssp *parviflora*, the latter due to rot at the base and being in a too wet a spot. I am surprised the other losses were all eastern species which I thought were resilient species, but then they probably do get some moisture in their local environment over summer.

The coming of winter also heralds in the start of a new season of Hakea flowering. In our garden at present flowering are *bicornata*, *cristata*, all the subspecies of *petiolaris*, *myrtoides*, all the ssp. of *decurrens*, *marginata*, *clavata*, and *megadenia*, with many more to flower in the next couple of months.

Hakea excursion.

Now that the Western Australian border is open to travelers from the eastern states I have taken the chance to organize an excursion in Western Australia that we had to cancel last year due to Covid 19. Some years ago we had an excursion north of Perth to the Eneabba area but the day we were to spend in the Mount Lesueur area was rained out. This time I have planned three days covering the Eneabba area and we will pick the finest day to explore the Mount Lesueur area itself. In all I hope we will come across some 35 species of Hakea. Our base for three nights will be Jurien Bay. There is plenty of accommodation there and we will travel out each day to different areas. The dates are Tuesday August 30th to Friday morning 2nd of September, 2022. Three WA members have already booked with me but other members are most welcome. Please contact me if you are interested. Early reports are that it will be a great wildflower season.

I would love to spend a lot more time over there and do some of the outer areas from

Esperance (Cape Le Grande) to Peak Charles and the Sandstone- Meekatharra- Exmouth areas where Hakeas are not so plentiful but nevertheless worthy of being seen in the wild.

Seed bank.

The seed bank is well stocked with a lot of Hakea species. Now is the time to think about what species you would like to grow in your garden for planting out in the autumn of next year. Planting in summer is not recommended unless you live where there is summer rainfall or in a cooler climate like Elliminyt where I live. Thanks to all those that have sent seed.

News from members.

Barry Teague from Swan Hill, Victoria has had a major operation and I am pleased to report that Barry is now home and recovering. Elva, his wife, has done a marvelous job in travelling long distances to visit Barry and keeping his Hakea seedlings alive.

Tom Constant from Bullsbrook in WA has battled through the summer heat and dryness to keep his young Hakeas alive. Plants were watered once to twice a week but even so a Hakea lorea planted in the winter months failed to survive. Wind damaged large plants of Hakea "Stockdale sensation" and laurina which he has had to remove.

Jennifer Young is well known for her book on Hakeas of Western Australia but I can report she has now produced one on Melaleucas of Western Australia which is more based on photographs with a few line drawings. It appears age does not prevent Jennifer from tackling new projects. If you would like more details on the Melaleuca book please contact me.

Phil Trickett and Catriona Bate at Milton in NSW had 802mm of rain in two days in March and a whopping 1239mm of rain for the first three months of the year. They have lost quite a few plants including Hakeas as the ground is so waterlogged. They are on top of a hill but with that type of rain the ground just gets saturated.

Chris Nickolic who lives near Ipswich in southern Queensland sent photos of water running under the house, and through the nursery. Despite the torrential rain his garden did not suffer too much.

New members.

We welcome Allan Tinker from Heathcote Victoria, to our Study group. Allan and his wife ran the Caravan Park north of Eneabba for many years before retiring to Victoria when their children live. Allen had a great knowledge of the local flora and led day excursions in the area.

We also welcome Mark Burns from Queensland who just joined as this newsletter went to print.

Financial.

Balance forward	\$4014-86
Income	
Subscriptions	30-00
Expenditure.	
Printing and postage of Newsletter No. 78	50-53
Balance as of 1 st . June, 2022	\$3994-33

Garden maintenance.

Some of my hakeas develop dieback on the tips of branches, which I think is caused by the plant being in too moist a position during the winter months. It could also be caused by some fungus. I find that cutting back the decayed tips at the end of winter leads to new growth, so the result is quite satisfactory.

Now is also the time to look at your garden and see if beds need to be raised or drainage improved as most Hakeas do not tolerate wet conditions around their roots.

Small Hakeas for gardens.

In this issue I thought it might be worthwhile to write about some of the small Hakeas suitable for gardens as many properties now have small gardens. There are probably some twenty species which could be considered. Most will grow well in southern States in well-drained soils but in areas where summers are warm and wet, grafting would have to be considered.

Hakea myrtooides. Probably the smallest of all Hakeas and unfortunately clearing of land has made this species endangered in the wild. It grows in the Darling escarpment just east of Perth and north in the Bullsbrook area in sandy soils with some filtered shade. Its ovate shaped pointed leaves and weeping foliage make it quite attractive. The masses of pinky red flowers appear in late May. The seed capsules are small and the seed is retained. To date grown by enthusiasts but needs to be introduced into more gardens. Can be easily propagated from cuttings and also grafted. Growing from seed is not recommended unless seed is from garden grown plants. Flowering here in Elliminyt in sandy soils under dappled shade.

Hakea costata. Grows north of Perth in the Eneabba area in sandy soils, often in heath. Not easily found in bushland as it blends in with other flora; however, when the masses of white flowers appear in winter it is easily observed. A small plant to 1m high and multistemmed, and it is quite compact. The green terete leaves are short to 1.5cm long. The seed capsules are extremely small to 3mm long and are retained on the shrub. Has grown easily for me in a raised bed of loamy soil and flowers every year. Can be propagated from seed or cuttings.

Hakea conchifolia. Another species from the sand heaths north of Perth which has light green shell shaped leaves. It is quite ornamental and has large white flowers in the leaf axis in August. The seed capsules are small and elongated and are hidden in the leaf axils. Seed is retained. A great contrasting foliage plant for gardens. Not fast growing here at Elliminyt but that could be due to the soil being too moist in winter.

Hakea smilacifolia. Another species from the sand heaths north of Perth. Tends to be a more upright plant with the most unusually shaped leaves. The white flowers are hidden in the leaves and likewise the small seed capsules, which are retained. Not often seen in gardens but because of its ornamental appearance should be grown more. The leaf is ovate in shape and leathery with an entire, wavy margin, which is often folded over and curving. There is longitudinal and cross venation. New growth is a rusty brown. Occurs north of Perth to Dongara and an outlier near Ravensthorpe. Not a quick growing plant here at Elliminyt but I am hoping it will flower this year.

Hakea sulcata. Grows in a variety of soils which can be quite moist in winter. It has an extensive distribution from Jurien Bay around the coast to Israelite Bay and to some distance inland. Tends to be an upright compact bush with masses of creamy white flowers in September to October. The leaves tend to be subterete, thick and pentagonal in cross section with six longitudinal veins. The seed are only about 8 mm long and firmly attached to the branch in the leaf axils. A hardy species which should do well in many gardens in soils that are not too heavy.

Hakea auriculata. Grows in sandy soils with what I call buckshot gravel in areas around Badgingarra. A plant to about 1m high with spatulate shaped leaves with cross shaped leaves on the tips of branches. The older leaves tend to die and make mulch for the plant, which may be due to the plant

requiring nutrients to keep the new leaves green. The flowers can vary from cream to deep pink in spring. The seed is ovate with prickles on the surface and is retained. Grows quite well here at Elliminyt, and has flowered for a number of years but has not set seed.

Hakea anadenia. Grows in sandy soils north of Perth as far as Three Springs, often in open heath. The light coloured leaves are obovate to narrowly elliptic in shape with one to three longitudinal veins above and below. There is also cross venation and the leaf margins have prickly dentations. The creamy flowers are profuse and the seed is retained on the plant. A very compact light green bush in the garden which is quite attractive. Plants growing in a raised bed have set seed at Elliminyt.

Hakea oligoneura.

This Hakea is located in the limestone sandhills of Yalgorup NP south of Mandurah in Western Australia. It is becoming quite endangered due to frequent burnings and human activities. It is very similar to Hakea anadenia but the leaves do not have cross venation. Plants here at Elliminyt do not live more than four years but this could be due to drainage not being sufficient as it grows in sand hills just back from the beach, which are probably also alkaline due to limestone also being present. However, they do grow quickly, flower and set seed at about two years of age.

Propagation.

Work on bringing the rarer and difficult to grow species into cultivation continues. Grafting trials are continuing with H persiehana, rhombales and stanleyensis. Cuttings of H aenigma and asperma have been successful but the strike rate is low. I am still hopeful of receiving seed of H arborescens, divaricata and macrocarpa later this year.

Hakea subsulcata.

One of the first of the sulcata group to flower is Hakea subsulcata They take some four years from planting in the ground to flowering in late May here at Elliminyt. It flowered in 2021 but with only a few flowers, but this year it is a mass of flowers on older wood along the stems. The flower is a mauve color and quite attractive. The bush itself is on a raised bed and with quite dense fine terete foliage. Known sometimes as the broombush, the foliage consists of grey-green leaves 3-12 cm long and with 12 longitudinal veins extending from near the base of the leaf to the tip. The flowers are in rounded clusters of about fifty individual flowers, white on opening but turning mauve with age. The fruit can be in bundles of up to twenty, short stalked, long and narrow and tapering to a conical beak, ovoid in shape and with a smooth surface. This species is found in the wheat belt of Western Australia in a variety of well drained soils. Has been grown with success in the wheat belt of southern states of Victoria and South Australia. For those who have a reasonable sized garden, it is one I would recommend you try.

As I finish off this newsletter, winter has really set in, only 7 degrees C maximum here yesterday and 23mm of rain. Dare to say I did not venture out to do any gardening, just a quick run around to see all the plants were looking OK. We have had three light frosts, which is a bit unusual for the start of winter, but the subtropical plants look OK. The short leaf form of Hakea pycnoneura and Hakea scoparia ssp. trycherica, both from Mount Ragged east of Esperance in Western Australia, have burst into flower, which is good as they inhabit just a small area in their natural environment. Please continue to send me in reports of your success and failures in growing Hakeas. I would love to visit your gardens but my wife Barbara has health issues which prevent me from doing much traveling. In the meantime, enjoy your gardening activities.

Cheers, Paul.



Hakea cyclocarpa



Hakea bicornata



Hakea myrtooides



Hakea petiolaris ssp. *angusta*