

HIBBERTIA STUDY GROUP

Newsletter No. 14
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Well here I am again, somewhat late like the rains we have all been waiting to arrive. The rainfall is well down on the average up to June, with record dry spells over summer and autumn. The first three months were the driest on record with only 2.4 mm of rain recorded, and the last week of March with an average maximum of 33°C being the hottest final week of March on record.

The following notes are on how some of my Hibbertia's fared over this period. Having found previously that numerous Eastern States Hibbertia's did not succeed in the Perth sands, I had several growing in a mix of 3 sand, 1 peat with a hand full of crushed charcoal mixed into a 2 gallon pot, several Western Australian Hibbertia's were also treated this way. All plants were under a patio covered with sarlon and received hand watering. As I was working in the North West over most of this period it is difficult to say whether they received too much water, not enough or the effect of the continual heat was the problem. Those that appeared to be dead were left in their pots with the result some have started making new growth.

HIBBERTIA AMPLEXICAULIS

Two in pots died back completely, but one by early May had started sending out new shoots. I have noticed this occurs in their natural habitat where areas have been cleared, regeneration occurs from root stock. The two I had in the garden as mentioned in Newsletter No. 12 both died over the summer, plants were between 4 and 6 years old.

HIBBERTIA DENTATA

Three plants in pots and three in hanging baskets, all healthy with vigorous growth, varying in age from 1 to 4 years old all died. The four year old plant had seeded well, I had placed seeds in pot in which it was growing and at mid May numerous seedlings had appeared. I have used this method with good results over the past 2 years. A plant in the garden in a protected position had struggled for several years also died during this period.

HIBBERTIA ASPERA

A plant in a pot had made good growth, quite healthy being 40 cm high died early April, whilst a plant in the garden about 15 cm high, with few branches, receiving filtered sun from midday, and no watering survived, both plants were about 3 years old, neither plant had flowered up to this time.

HIBBERTIA FASCICULATA

A healthy plant about 20 cm high in a pot had flowered quite profusely during spring, died early April.

HIBBERTIA FURURACEA

Also in a pot, this plant was about 12 months old had made good growth to 25 cm. Hibbertia Fururacea died back and appear dead but by mid May was making new growth.

HIBBERTIA PEDUNCULATA

A very dense mat like plant, about 25 cm diameter had flowered during spring and into summer, also died early April. This plant was 3 years old and makes an ideal pot plant, I had noticed that it had previously formed roots on several branches trailing along potting mix.

HIBBERTIA OBTUSIFOLIA

Two green leaf forms and one grey leaf, all prostrate and very dense, had flowered profusely for a long period over spring. All plants died early April, but one green leaf form had new shoots appearing by mid May. One grey leaf form in the garden which receives filtered sunlight from midday has also survived. This plant like all others was 3 years old, very straggly and open, had made very little growth since being planted.

HIBBERTIA STELLARIS

Three plants, all had flowered well during late winter and spring, were quite healthy, died during this period plants being 2 years old.

HIBBERTIA VESTITA

A spreading open plant up to 50 cm diameter, had flowered over spring, was three years old, also died early April

As seen from the above the conditions have taken their toll, but it is interesting to see that several plants have managed to survive and make new growth, comments invited from members on similar situations.

From heat waves to outright bush fires it is of interest to note the performances of Hibbertias in their natural habitat in a couple of areas in Victoria following the disastrous fires they had in 1982. These notes are from John Knight who visited the area the following spring.

"We have recently visited Anglesea on the coast of Melbourne. this area was devastated by fire last summer and has come alive with orchids and lillies, some making their first appearance for years. Few Hibbertia's were in flower, having been burnt to the ground. Instead there was strong suckering re-growth, especially from Hibbertia StrictaxProstrata (syn. Fasciculata), Hibbertia Sericea was also growing back well and looking better than I had seen previously."

"The following week was spent at the Grampians another area badly affected by the drought. Flowering was only spasmodic, but again Hibbertia's were well represented; in many areas they were the only plants in flower. Hibbertia Cistiflora, Prostrata, Sericea, Stricta, Virgata and Humifusa were all showing good growth and flowering well. I am amazed at the variation between plants, many specimens would not key out, differing in some way from the keys, especially in the number of developing seeds and stamens."

"After the Grampians we spent some time on the Mornington Peninsular, south of Melbourne, where I found for the first time Hibbertia Australis. For some time I had dismissed it as a form of Hibbertia Stricta, but upon closer inspection, I observed it as subtle differences, mainly pedicel length and shinning inner surface of the sepals."

"Finally we visited south west Victoria, The lower Glenelg and Mount Richmond National Parks where Hibbertia Aspera (2 forms, a large leaf and small leaf) Hibbertia Sericea and Hibbertia Stricta were found."

I would like to welcome Mrs P. Shaw, of 5 Fleetwood Street, M^CGregor, Queensland.

B. Dixon.