

## HIBBERTIA STUDY GROUP

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With the rain in the South-West of Western Australia down 40 % on the annual average, it is interesting to compare the behavior of several species of HIBBERTIA, at this time of the year to the same time in 1978 when rainfall was up to average. The area is 200 kilometres south of Perth where the gullies and flats are quite dry. Here H. STELLARIS and H. RHADINOPODA can be found in some of these areas in large numbers.

Normally H. STELLARIS would commence flowering in July-<sup>or</sup> August and new growth would be prominent, but a visit to several areas shows the fine terete, blue-grey foliage which STELLARIS takes on over the summer months still prominent. Flowering is practically non-existent and the flower buds not much better. I have also noticed numerous plants dying even though the earth retains a reasonable amount of moisture close to the surface. Normally in this area H. STELLARIS can be found growing in very damp to wet ground, though I have often found specimens growing on the sides of steep banks in clay and gravel which retains no water.

H. RHADINOPODA which quite often grows in association with H. STELLARIS is a compact plant up to 40 centimetres in diameter and 5 centimetres in height is in a similar state with very poor foliage, and though H. RHADINOPODA doesn't commence flowering until September no sign of flower buds are to be seen.

H. HYPERICOIDES is another one to suffer, but this is due to the many frosts that have been experienced in the area this year. I was quite surprised to see plants in the cleared areas, badly affected whilst plants which had the protection of shrubs and trees which have not been affected. Seeing as H. HYPERICOIDES has lignotubers which assists it to regrow after fires the frost will only be a temporary set back for this hardy plant.

Two HIBBERTIAS which seem to show the opposite effect are H. VAGINATA and H. TERETIFOLIA, both are in full flower presenting a colourful sight.

H. VAGINATA which I have seen growing over a large area seems to favour sandy areas and plants growing in an open situation have a more compact and better flowering habit than those in the forest. Plants grow up to 70 centimetres high and 60 centimetres in diameter, flowers are approximately 20 millimetres in diameter, are at the junction of a stem and leaf which is up to 5 centimetres long and 8 millimetres wide, with a revolute cross section, and also has a broad ovate floral leaf, this HIBBERTIA presents quite a good flowering plant from July through to October.

H. TERETIFOLIA grows in both gravel and sand, and the few areas I have found are around 100 metres in diameter with large numbers of plants and very few outside this area. H. TERETIFOLIA appears to favour an open to very light top shade. Young plants are generally erect, but later become compact 40 centimetres high by 60 centimetres in diameter. The flowers are approximately 10 millimetres in diameter and when in full bloom in August-September the plant is a mass of yellow, hiding both leaves and stems.

After seeing these HIBBERTIAS, one must ask how do we get them into our gardens - Persistence - this we must endeavour to do, with seed if obtainable or cuttings, trying different methods, soil mixtures, different times of the year, etc, in an endeavour to succeed. Direct seeding - by this I mean scattering of seed in the garden instead of containers, I have found this successful with other species of our native plants.

H. HYPERICOIDES- No success with cutting last year, tips grew out of cuttings, survived for 5 months but did not form roots.

H. STELLARIS- Quite successful with cuttings, approximately 75% successfully rooted, though growing on somewhat neglected.

H. TERETIFOLIA- No success, 10 cuttings tried.

H. VAGINATA- Seeds - Poor results considering quantity of seed sown, possibly seed not fertile. Several mixes of soil tried when potting on, found that straight sand, top soil was most successful. I have three growing in straight sand which have shown good growth and flowering profusely, whilst three growing in an area composted and sawdust added are very slow in growth and flower. I have found the same with several other HIBBERTIA. Cuttings - 6 tried, none successful.

All the above are being or will be tried again in the next few months, hopefully with greater success.

Individual membership has now reached seven, one from each state. I would be please to receive any information from members concerning HIBBERTIAS which could be used in future newsletter and information on propogating and growing which youare doing yourself. Also I would appreciate if members would advise me where seed can be obtained, I feel a seed bank is a must, so as we can all participate in endeavouring to grow HIBBERTIA from seed.

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