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AUSTRALIAN NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY, AUSTRALIA

HAKEA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER NUMBER 41

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Dear members,

At long last I can get down to producing this newsletter. The ASGAP 2009 conference and seminar in Geelong is over and after a few weeks of rest up near Coffs Harbour we are home again and getting on with the tasks that have been put aside.

We have been through another dry winter and spring and at the beginning of November the temperature is again hovering around 37 degrees C. We look as though we will again experience a horrible summer and I wonder what will be alive in March next year. The yearly rainfall so far is 203 mm, about 40% of our normal and our 13th year of drought. The sub soil is now very dry and even large trees are starting to die. Oh, to have some of that rain that falls on the northern NSW coast where my son plants native plants including local Hakeas and does not have to water again. I noticed that Melbourne has had the lowest rainfall of all the capital cities this year, so Victoria is really very dry.

I expect it will be very difficult to keep all the Hakeas alive this summer. The effects of drought over such a long period means that many are already stressed and once they reach these conditions it is hard to get them to return to normal healthy plants when good rains do occur. So what have I observed as a result of the drought and that incredibly hot February day in 2009?

In the June issue I mentioned the Hakea losses that occurred due to the extreme heat and how others survived. Since then there has not been a great deal of new growth put on as it has been just too dry to stimulate new growth. Hakea grammatophylla has flowered on and off for the past six months and its short bright pink racemes are a delight to look at. Hakea stenophylla ssp. notialis flowered as though there was no need to have moisture to survive and its cream flowers were dense all over the bush. Hakea bucculenta put out its normal bright red flower racemes which last for about four months each year. Hakea aculeata also flowered well with its yellow/orange flowers all the way up its column like trunks. Hakea fraseri flowered again in late September and those on the post conference bus trip had the delight of seeing it in flower. These been the exception with most of the remaining Hakeas flowering sparingly or not at all. The first three above are accustomed to long dry periods

Some of the Hakea newbeyanas have died slowly due to lack of moisture. They were not watered over the past thirteen years and the effect of drought has finally caught up with them. Hakea anadenia, another one that grows south of Perth tried to hang on, but despite some added water finally gave up the ghost in September. I managed to pick a large quantity of seed as it had flowered well in previous years and set seed.

For some years specimens of Hakea francissiana had shown die back of limbs and I wondered if an air borne disease
had infected them. As healthy Banksias were growing in conjunction with them I was fairly certain it was not phytophthora. I had noticed die back in specimens on the Eyre peninsula in South Australia where periods of drought is not uncommon and recently at the Burrendong Arboretum in NSW I noticed old specimens showing the same effect. Each year they put out new shoots from old woody branches and whilst it looks unsightly they seem to survive by this mechanism. It will be interesting to see what happens if we receive a really wet year.

Welcome to new members.

It is pleasing to see the membership increasing and the interest being shown in growing Hakeas. A special welcome to:
Jon Real, Canberra. APS Latrobe Valley Group. Ray Clay, Points Arboretum, Coleraine, Victoria. Hana Chvojka, Quinninup, WA.

Christine Wadey, North Eltham , Vic. Peter Mandragin, The Pinnacles, NSW. Carole Barren, Ungarie, NSW, Joe Boevink, North West Tasmania and Kevin Collins, Mount Barker, WA.

Letters from members.

It is always a pleasure to hear from members and their successes or otherwise in growing Hakeas.

Carmel Spark from the northern side of the Blue Mountains wrote about very tall specimens of Hakea dactyloides they had seen and asked about the differences between it and Hakea laevipes ssp. laevipes which is the lignotuberous form of Hakea dactyloides.

Col Wallace from Kingaroy wrote about the successes they were having with Hakeas and requested more seed.

Hans Greisser from the Adelaide Hills said he had joined the APS SA trip to the Mount Gambier region and had visited Max Ewers garden at Lucindale and was blown away by the size and number of Hakeas Max has growing. He cannot resist trying some of the higher rainfall species as they are so interesting.

Diane and Graeme Krake live near Brogo in NSW has been extending their collection of Hakes to 108 species. There are 7 more to plant out and 26 more species to germinate. Well done!! They have had to extend their fencing to keep the wallabys out.

Bob Stewart from Maryborough in central Victoria is having a tremendous battle with drought and keeping his Hakeas alive is proving difficult due to shortage of water.

G Cooke from near Bairnsdale says the drought is also bad in East Gippsland and the springs on his property have dried up. He thinks the proposed new species of Hakea by Bill Molyneux is a form of Hakea lissosperma from the Nunninong plateau.

Pat Gilmore from Cumnock near the Burrendong Arboretum in NSW wrote to say she had purchased some 50 species of Hakea from Max Ewer earlier this year and along with some other older species all were growing well.

Pauline Whicksteed from Gunning wrote about her trip into outback WA and coming across the inland forms of Hakea lorea ssp lorea and Hakea rhombales.

Hakea crawl, 2010

The Fred Rogers seminar in 2010 will be held in Bairnsdale on August 21st and 22nd. The topic will be hybrid Grevilleas. It would seem appropriate either before or after the event to look at the Hakeas in members gardens and in the bush from Bairnsdale around to Batemans Bay and maybe up to Canberra as well. There is quite a number of interesting Hakeas to be found in this region and some of the private collections are quite extensive in number of species grown. If you would like to part of it please let me know.

Hakeas in members gardens.

The tours associated with the ASGAP 2009 conference and seminar allowed me to have a look at some of the Hakea species growing in members gardens. At Brendon and Maureen Stahl's garden at Deans Marsh there were some lovely bushy forms of Hakea cucullata with bright pink flowers. They were growing in sandy loam over clay with a rainfall of around 800mm. Next to them were Hakea olifolia's in flower which had set seed from a previous season. Another to do well was Hakea pandanicarpa which seems to be at home in a great variety of soils as well as quite dry to moist conditions provided the soil is well drained. Hakea neurophylla also attracted a lot of attention with its pink flowers and woody down curved pointed fruits.

At Graeme and Ros Woods garden at Gisborne the extensive Hakea collection of about 140 species were all putting on new growth and members from interstate were quite impressed just how well Hakeas from other parts of Australia were growing. Hakea rugosa was in full flower and it took a while to work out what species it was as many of these short terete leaf plants are not easy to identify unless seed is also on the plant.

Hakeas at Burrendong Arboretum.

I always enjoy wandering around this arboretum as it has a great array of Australian plants. Recently I spent two hours looking at various Hakeas with Jim Dutton and some of his staff. Burrendong arboretum goes back some fifty years to when the Althofer brothers started it. Hence some of the Hakea species are very old and it enables us to have a look at the long life span of these plants especially when they have had to deal with drought and flooding rains. The soil is a rocky clay loam and the rainfall about 500mm in a normal year. Jim wanted

me to look at very old plants of Burrendong beauty which were probably the original plants from which the name originated. The leaves were longer than the normal forms we see in the own gardens under this name and the seed larger than Hakea myrtoides, but not as big as Hakea petiolaris. I have brought some home with me to germinate and see what leaf form eventuates. A nursery at Pomonal in Victoria years ago gave me a plant with very long narrow pointed leaves (50mm) and I am still waiting for it to flower. My own view is that if a plant produces different leaf forms from seed, then it is probably a hybrid.

I also spoke to Jim about the short life span of Hakea salicifolia forms in northern Victoria. Jim showed me the remains of a trunk some 400mm in diameter of a very old plant that had died some years ago. Maybe soil has a part to play in its life span. Coming up the Hume Highway south of Goulburn I noticed many of the Hakea salicifolia's in the road verge were looking very yellow. I presumed this to be the result of very cold conditions although road construction materials may have affected the soil PH. Yellowing of leaves can also be due to dry conditions too. Back in the bush they looked a lot healthier.

Others Hakea species of note were vigorous plants of Hakea myrtoides and clavata in built up beds. The dry conditions of the past few years has not affected them. There were enormous old specimens of Hakea petiolaris ssp trycherica, obtusa, scoparia and pandanicarpa. The fabulous weeping form of Hakea lorea from Cape York are a delight to see and the semi weeping forms of Hakea lorea from south east Queensland near the car park have all flowered and set seed.

It was pleasing to see new plantings of Hakeas at the arboretum but many more species still need to be introduced as Hakeas grow well there.

Hakea teretifolia

One of the joys of travelling is coming across populations of Hakea in the wild. Just south of Port Macquarie on the NSW coast there were acres of a low white flowering shrub which upon stopping and inspecting proved to be Hakea teretifolia ssp. teretifolia. Having seen Hakea teretifolia ssp. hirsuta in the Grampians I had wondered what the differences were but never got around to having a good look. So below are some botanical descriptions which define the two sub species.

Elements.	Ssp. teretifolia	ssp. hirsuta.
Branchlets	deeply appressed sericeous	densely tomentose, terminal branchlets more quickly glabrous whilst remaining densely pubescent at their base.
Pedicels	densely white appressed -sericeous	densely tomentose, white to cream yellow
Pistil	7.5 – 11mm	9 – 17mm
Distribution	Coffs Harbour to Sydney region and Budawang Range.	Coastal heaths south of Sydney, through southern Victoria and Tasmania.
Flowering	September to February.	November to February.

Again Gwen Harden's book on Proteaceae of NSW gives sketches of what to look for in distinguishing the sub species and sketches in the appendix of the botanical terminology. Again if you know where your plant originated from it may be a great help in working out what species you have.

Financial report.

Balance forward at 8th. of June 2009	$1638 – 64
Subscriptions	350 - 00
Expenditure	
Printing and postage, newsletter No. 40	54 – 00
Balance at 9th. of November, 2009	$1934 – 64

Thankyou to all those who have sent their subscriptions in. A receipt will be included in the newsletter to those who receive it by post. I will e mail an subscription acknowledgement to each individual who receives the newsletter by e mail.

Hakea ivoryi.

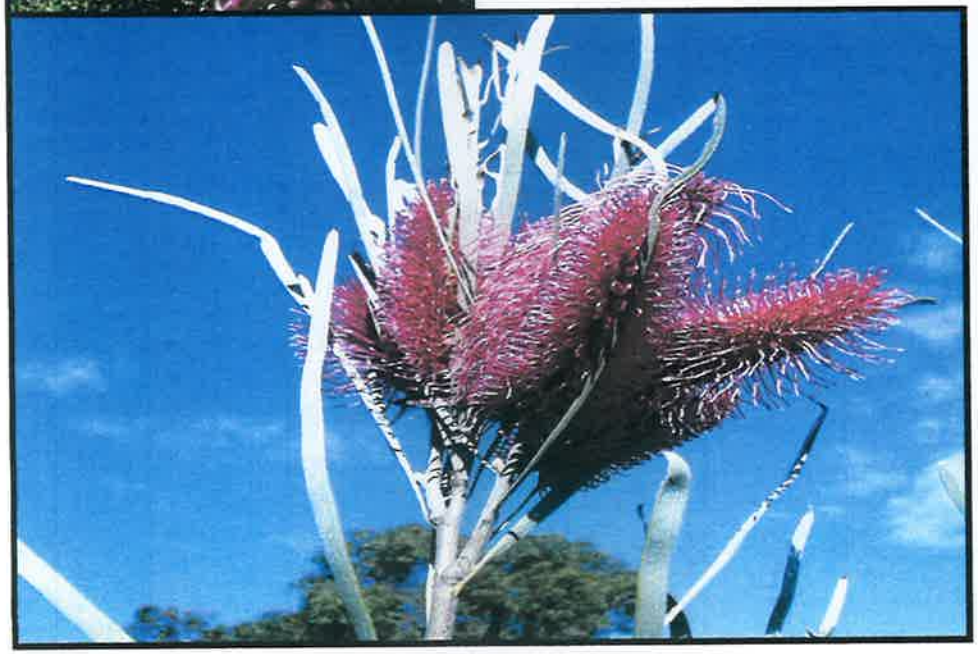
As I go to print another of the inland Hakeas has finally flowered. I looked at it a week ago and could see no sign of flowers developing. Yesterday I happened to walk past it and there were three flower racemes on it. They are a light creamy color and about 50mm long. This species grows between Bourke in NSW and Quilpie- Charleville in Queensland on rocky soils in open woodland. It has corkwood bark and the leaves are short with many segments per leaf stem. It looks similar to Hakea eyreana and edniana but they do not overlap in occurrence. There are good specimens at Myall Park arboretum at Glenmorgan in Queensland. A plant for inland gardens where summers can be very hot and dry. It has not been tried in cooler climates to my knowledge. The plant here is ten years old and two metres high.

This is the last newsletter for the year, so I wish you all a very happy Christmas and a great year in 2010 in growing and learning more about this wonderful genus called Hakea. Up here 200mmm of rain would be an ideal Christmas present, lets hope the drought breaks soon. Please send me reports on how your Hakeas survived this summer. Next newsletter due out late February 2010.
As I print out this newsletter, 50mm of rain has fallen overnight, lets hope there is more to come.
Regards, Paul.

Paul

Hakea purpurea

Hakea ivoryii



Hakea francisiana

Hakea aculeata