AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY AUSTRALIA

HAKEA STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER No. 73

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Leader: Paul Kennedy
Address: 210 Aireys Street
Elliminyt Vic. 3250
E mail hakeaholic@gmail.com

Dear members.

I start this newsletter in the midst of the coronavirus crisis. It has caused most of us to rethink how we communicate with our friends and how to reuse our spare time. Fortunately for those who have gardens to look after it has given us the time to do some catch up works and get some additional propagation activity under way.

This year has been one of great challenge for many of us. The terrible fires in the eastern States followed by a year's rainfall in many places in February has made it very difficult to keep plants alive. Some of my friends in Grafton and Milton have recorded some 650mm of rain in one month after nearly six months without any significant rain. Plants that had endured dried out soils were suddenly exposed to water logging. There are not many native plants that can withstand those conditions.

Here at Elliminyt we had very little moisture in February and March and as the soil dried out I had to revert to watering the smaller Hakeas to keep them alive. The temperatures over summer have been very mild with a couple of hot days and this has suited many of the plants especially from southern Australian climates. Most put on considerable growth and in March I suddenly realised that in places plants had joined together and formed a jungle appearance. To overcome this the pruning equipment was required along with the mulcher.

Autumn is always a lovely time to enjoy the sight of new growth on plants and early signs of flower buds appearing. There are only a few Hakeas that flower over summer, linearis being one of them. In March I observed buds forming on Hakea petiolaris species, bicornata and the grass leaf species such as francisiana and multilineata. By the beginning of April bicornata was in flower along with Hakea megadenia. The latter is very similar to Hakea epiglottis and both are endemic to Tasmania. However Hakea megadenia flowers in April-May whilst epiglottis flowers in the springtime, so making it easy to differentiate between the two species. Hakea bicornata is a very early flowering species from the Esperance area in WA. It normally forms a large dense bush of dark green terete foliage that points upwards. I have seen it growing near Mount Burdett, north east of Esperance many years ago. It flowers profusely here in Elliminyt in sandy loam but for some reason it has not set any seed as yet.

Propagation.

My efforts this summer and autumn was to propagate some of the rarer species as well as producing plants to increase numbers in my garden of particular species where I had only one.

I used mainly the saucer method to germinate seeds and have now potted on bakeriana,

bucculenta, carinata, candolleana, cinerea, cycloptera, collina, cygna ssp cygna, eneabba, erecta, eyreana, dohertyi, epiglottis ssp . milliganii, flabellifolia, gibbosa, hastata, linearis, longiflora, lorea, lorianthifolia, obliqua ssp obliqua, pandanicarpa ssp. pandanicarpa, pendens, psilorrhyncha, ruscifolia, spatulata, and stenophylla x 2ssp. I have been able to germinate Hakea maconochieana from seed but keeping it going has proved very difficult. It comes from the Quilpie area in Queensland and is extremely tough surviving years of drought and summer heat in rocky soils. However it seems to be very sensitive to moisture and fertilizers in the potting mix, so if any members have had success in growing this endangered species I would appreciate hearing from you.

In my garden there have been some self germination of Hakeas. Some time ago I lost a Hakea multilineata species due to it being too wet, from the Wongan Hills area of Western Australia which had quite wide leaves. It flowered and set a few seeds which I thought were not mature at the time of death. However some eighteen months later a seedling has come up and I will be hoping this one survives our wet winter/ spring and produces flowers and mature seed.

The very rare Hakea aspermas from the alpine area east of Benambra in Victoria have grown to nearly 1.5m high and look very healthy. As they do not set seed they survive by sending up new plants from underground shoots. I am pleased that I am now seeing new shoots appear from underground roots which means I will have a cluster of plants shortly. However those Hakeas planted nearby may perish to the invasion of the roots of Hakea asperma.

I usually like to leave seed capsules on the plant until needed where species retain their seed. However the yellow tailed black cockatoos decided in early April to pay a visit and settled into cracking open the seed capsules of petiolaris ssp petiolaris, propinqua, stenocarpa and decurrens ssp. platytaenia. They can be very destructive even to the point of biting off branches to get at the seed capsules. To ensure I had some seed in the seed bank I picked a quantity of each one.

Financial report.

Balance forward 1st. February 2020	$3667-20
Income subscriptions	75-00
Expenditure	
Print and post newsletter No. 72	108-71
Balance as of 31st. May 2020	$3633-49

Shortly I will write to members whose subscriptions are due. With so many members now paying for years in advance there is not a great number coming due.

Welcome to new members.

We welcome Claire Caldiera from Perth and hope she can come along to some of our wanderings in Western Australia. Also to Jeanette Graham of Strathmerton in northern Victoria.

Member reports.

Both on Facebook and also from members there have been reports of early flowering of Hakeas laurina, petiolaris and “Burrendong Beauty” from Western Australia and from the central coast of NSW. I suspect the warmer climate and sunny days have induced them to start in late March. Here in Elliminyt the first of these to flower was petiolaris ssp. angusta in mid April.

Verna Aslin, a member of our Study group from Cobargo in southern NSW, wrote to me

after the bush fires to say she had also suffered the loss of her hot house and garden from the fire but her house was saved. She is building a new hot house and I was pleased to send her some Hakea seed to get her garden going again.

Phil Trickett and Catriona Bate at Milton are continuing to replant their garden after the February bush fires. One of the Hakeas that did not get burnt was Hakea victoriae. They have two in their garden, one grafted onto Hakea salicifolia and the other on its own roots. Both are growing quite well. Phil is also experimenting with grafting Hakea victoriae onto Grevillea robusta and results are looking positive.

Jeanette Graham is growing H petiolaris ssp trychophylla, pendens, purpurea, neurophylla and "Burrendong Beauty". Her soil is a sandy loam over heavy clay with very hot summers and cool winters. Rainfall this year has been above average for the first four months but can be very unreliable.

Hans Griesser has Hakea cycloptera flowering and Hakea "Burrendong Beauty" at Gumeracha in the Adelaide hills. Many of the remainder of his quite large Hakea collection are budding up. Hakea cycloptera can flower over a very long period, December to August.

Cliff and Sayaka Wallis live on the coast at Merimbula and due to their mild climate and windy conditions some of their Hakea collection such as minyma and cristata grow as low spreading plants. Another coastal species from Western Australia, Hakea oleifolia, has grown to 8m.

Hakea petiolaris, laurina etc.

As these have been featured by viewers on Facebook frequently in late April and early May I thought I may say a few more words about them. Some have become very well known as garden plants. It is probably a good idea to keep them pruned as shrubs as they can be blown over in areas of strong winds. They are in the Hakea group of petiolaris.

Hakea laurina. This grows as a small tree to an erect shrub to 6m tall in a variety of soils from sandy to clay loams that are well drained. It is non sprouting. The leaves are 7 to 21 cm long including the petiole and 6-29mm wide. The leaf tips are bluntly acute and the leaves narrow at the base. The olive-green leaves have 3-7 longitudinal veins with some secondary veins visible. The pin cushion flowers are made up of 120-190 individual flowers that are pinkish in colour. The seed capsule is ovate-elliptic to 2.2-3.8cm long, shortly beaked with a longitudinal flange. The seed capsule can be in groups of more than one. A very striking plant in flower. I have seen very open forms and weeping forms of H laurina in gardens. I am not sure if they come true from seed and whether there are locations in Western Australia where they occur. Feedback from members would be appreciated. There are also hybrid forms between Hakea laurina and Hakea petiolaris.

Hakea petiolaris ssp petiolaris. The urban sprawl of Perth into the Darling Ranges is causing this plant to become threatened. It is the species that should be grown in our gardens as it is the smallest of the three ssp. being 1.5 – 3m high and wide. It also is resprouting, which means it can be pruned quite heavily, and grows in soils from well drained sandy loams to clay loams. The grey-green leaves are smaller, spathulate, 5.5-8.6cm long including petiole by 2.4-4.6cm wide. The longitudinal veins which are usually 3, are clearly visible and the leaf tip abruptly acuminate. The flowers are spherical in shape with pinkish perianth and whitish style. The seed capsule is ovate to 3.6cm long and grey in colour.

Hakea petiolaris ssp trichophylla. This is the species most commonly grown and can vary from a

tall shrub to a tree 9m tall. It grows in granitic soils from Wongan Hills to the Darling Range and south to Tuttanning reserve. It is a non-resprouter and will grow quickly into a tall plant if conditions are favourable. The grey-green leaves are spathulate 8-11.2 cm long including petiole and 3.2-6cm wide. Tips are acuminate. The spherical flowers have a cream perianth turning mauve to maroon. The style is whitish. The seed capsule is elliptic, to 3.5cm long with a grey surface. This is the common species grown in most gardens and very adaptable to soil type and climate.

Hakea petiolaris ssp angusta. This species grows in granitic soils around rock outcrops near Pingaring in Western Australia. It is non-lignotuberous and can grow to at least 5m tall. Here in Elliminyt in sandy soils of 90cm depth overlying clay they have reached 4m in five years and flowered. This species is different to the others in that the leaf petiole is 5mm or less. The grey green leaves are elliptic 7.2-15cm long by 2.3-4.0cm wide with the tip ending in a long tapering point. The flower is spherical and the perianth is cream turning a pinkish mauve. The style is whitish.

Hakea petiolaris "Stockdale Sensation". This hybrid occurred on Max Ewer's property at Avenue Range near Lucindale in South Australia. It is a much more bushy plant with brighter flowers and is probably a cross between Hakea laurina and Hakea petiolaris. The leaves too tend to be greener.

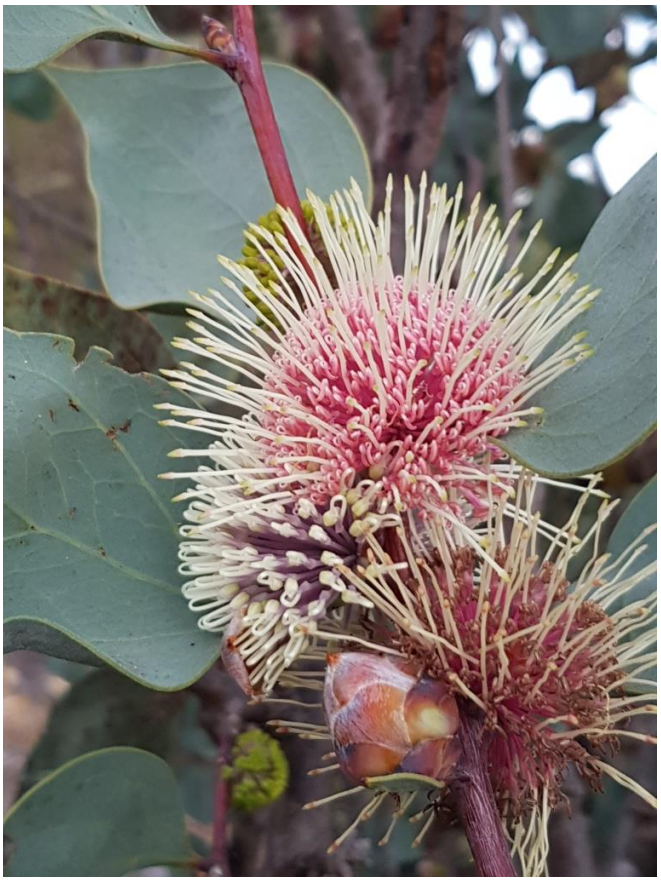
Hakea "Burrendong Beauty". This is a cross probably between Hakea myrtoides and Hakea petiolaris that occurred at Burrendong Arboretum near Wellington in NSW. The hybrid is vey striking in flower and varies between a semi prostrate plant and upright forms. The leaves are elliptic 1.5-2.5 cm long by 0.6 -1cm wide and very similar to the leaves on Hakea myrtoides. The flowers are pinkish in color. It has become popular in cultivation. Best grown from cuttings as seed tends to see the leaves become larger and revert back towards Hakea petiolaris.

The photos of Hakea laurina and Hakea "Burrendong Beauty" are from Jeanette Graham and Hakeas petiolaris ssp. trychophylla and petiolaris ssp. petiolaris are from Kevin and Kathy Collins from Mount Barker in WA. I thank them for their contribution to this newsletter.

I am hoping the travel restrictions within Australia will be lifted soon. One of the enjoyable duties of the Study group leader is to get around to visiting members and observing what species are being grown. The enforced staying at home has meant that the shed has had a big clean out, the garden has received some much needed maintenance and I have had no excuse not to catch up with matters concerning Australian native plants. I hope you all continue to have success growing Hakeas.

Cheers,
Paul.

Hakea laurina



Hakea petiolaris ssp petiolaris

Hakea “Burrendong Beauty”

Hakea petiolaris ssp trichophylla