

HAKEAS – a summary of a talk by Graeme Woods (Oct 2015)

Graeme comes from the APS Melton & Bacchus Marsh group. Members of this group, as part of Friends of Melton Botanic Gardens, helped create and manage the Gardens.

Graeme's message – *If in doubt plant a hakea.*

The 160-170 species of hakeas are members of the Proteacea family and can be found almost all over Australia. They are generally quite hardy in cultivation and require a sunny spot with well drained soil for best flowering. They are easily propagated from seed which is readily collected. Some of the more spectacular species, particularly the WA ones do not perform well in humid climates.

Most of them are shrubs and many bear beautiful flower spikes which are then followed by large and often unusual fruits/seed pods which because of their shape and colour are popular in dried flower arrangements. Hakeas and grevilleas can sometimes look a bit similar but closer inspection usually sorts that out. The seed pods and leaves are quite distinctive. The hakea leaf is similar on both sides while each side is different for the grevillea.

Graeme showed us a series of images of different Hakeas which included *Hakea clavata*, *auriculata*, *myrtoides*, *longiflora*, *erinacea*, *scoparia*, *obtusata*, *bakeriana*, *tuberculata*, *corymbosa* (cauliflower), *acuminata*, *rhombales*, *cucullata*, *petiolaris*, *bucculenta*, *neurophylla*, *cinerea* (yellow), *nodosa*, *verrucosa*, *cristata*, *invaginata*, *aculeata*, *orthorrhyncha*, (bird's beak hakea), *platysperma* (cricket ball hakea) *trifurcata* (two-leaf hakea – two types of leaf, one resembles a seed pod and fools the cockatoos who leave disappointed never to return) & *recurva* (desert hakea with a long spiny 'leaf' & viciously pointed tip). He had brought some flower specimens with him. Melton group (APS) does a lot of propagating, particularly hakeas which they sell at their annual *Hakea corymbosa* also through the nursery at the Melton Botanic Gardens.



Another most interesting part of Graeme's talk was on how to propagate hakeas. It really is quite simple and I have been collecting hakea seeds with renewed enthusiasm.

The recipe: Take one ceramic plate, put two sheets of moist paper towel on plate, place hakea seeds using forceps onto the moist paper a few cms apart, cover with paper towel, wrap up in plastic bag, hang in a dim room for a few weeks. Check every 5 days and once the shoot has emerged – a pale cream proboscis, plant in potting mix. That's it! We expect many Hakea seedlings at our plant sale next year.

Report by M. Ford – Oct 2015



Hakea lissocarpa