Goodeniaceae Study Group

Newsletter

April 2022

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CONTENTS

A Word from the Leader 1

Nature Changes 2

How tall can *Goodenia ovata* grow? 4

Dampiera purpurea 5

Scaevola aemula 6

Goodenia glomera: another pyrogenic species? 7

Some of Our Unknown Dampiera 8

Next Newsletter

The next newsletter will be published in **November 2022**

We would love to hear from you about your garden or what is going on in the local bush with plants of the Goodeniaceae family.

Photos are appreciated too.

A Word from the Leader

Royce Raleigh

Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter. After the wonderful spring we had, we have had a very dry but not hot summer, which required lots of watering. From 1st December until mid-April we had less than 40mm. Unfortunately, we have lost many plants, as we simply could not keep up the watering. Some of the plants that we have lost were some of the very fine leaved, and other unknown Dampieras, a number of which we only had the one plant. It is very disappointing, as one wonders whether or not we will ever be able to get them back again.

It is so important to ensure that if we have a rare, unknown or unusual plant, that it is propagated and spread to other gardeners to ensure that it can be cultivated into the future. Jeanne has been busily propagating many of our unusual plants throughout the summer but unfortunately we don't have the capability to do everything that we would like to, and it has been too late for some plants.

We feel sorry for our northern friends who have had to endure incredible rainfall and floods. We hope that members have not suffered too greatly. Here we have had our first frosts for the winter and with our relative dryness, the frost does greater damage than is usual.

Scaevola aemula

I would like to share a great form of *Scaevola aemula* which, with our watering, has continued flowering right through the summer. It has attracted so many butterflies during this time.

We need to be continually on the lookout for good forms of all sorts of plants whether it be from flowers, foliage, shape or longevity of flowering.

We hope that members are getting back to some sort of normality after the last couple of years. However it is concerning that we still have so many cases of covid and now influenza. We all know many who have contracted the virus recently. We hope that all members manage to keep well, and are able to get back to gardening and planting those plants that we were waiting to put in the ground.

Thank you to members who have contributed to this newsletter, and we urge others to make a contribution if at all possible. Any contribution, however small, assists us in making the newsletter more interesting to everyone.

Goodeniaceae Study Group

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Nature Changes

Text and Photos: Hazel Dempster

This amazing plant surfaced from a batch of self-sown seedlings of Scaevola argentea, a colourful ground cover with soft silver foliage. The different looking seedling enticed me to grow it on successfully to become and very floriferous mound flowering all summer and more. Propagates easily from branched cuttings and proving quite resilient to hot Perth summers with occasional deep watering. I gave it the name of *Scaevola argentea* x 'Wild Wonder'

Scaevola argentea.

Scaevola argentea x "Wild Wonder".

Scaevola argentea x "Wild Wonder".

Scaevola argentea x "Wild Wonder".

How tall can *Goodenia ovata* grow?

Text and Photos: Rodger Elliot

In an *Encyclopaedia* that I know very well it says that Hop Goodenia, *Goodenia ovata* can reach 2.5 m in height. Well, recently I have come across an even taller plant on one of my regular walking routes in south Berwick, east of Melbourne.

This plant is part of a mass planting of Hop Goodenias amongst a small copse of Black She-oak, *Allocasuarina littoralis* in a local college garden which is somewhat neglected by the maintenance crew. The plant in question is growing right against the trunk of the Black She-oak and is acting as a branch-climber as it scrambles upwards using the branch structure of the she-oak as a support for its somewhat slender branches.

Some readers may be asking what is a **'branch-climber'**? A branch-climber usually has horizontal spreading non-twining branches that become entangled with branches of a supporting shrub or tree and this enables the branch-climber to gain height as it growth increases.

All of the other Hop Goodenia plants nearby are shrubby and much shorter and it does make one question why is this plant much taller? Allocasuarinas are nitrogen-fixers via their roots like legumes but probably not as proficient as legumes and this might be beneficial to the Goodenia. However, because the plant is growing so close to the she-oak's trunk it would be doubtful to gain extra nitrogen because the she-oak's feeder roots are out near the drip line where available nitrogen is more likely to be located.

To me, there is another possibility in that when it rains, water will run down the trunk of the she-oak and therefore the *Goodenia ovata* roots will have access to extra water. I remember this as an important lesson that I picked up in the early 1960s when working with Glen Wilson the renowned landscape designer. It really does make much sense in placing plants against trunks because there is no root competition at the base of tree trunks and this practice should be applied much more today than is currently undertaken.

This is not a brilliant photo but it does show *Goodenia ovata* using its branches to act like a climber on a Black She-oak, *Allocasuarina littoralis*; note old dead leaves on spent stems following summer

Flowers and foliage of *Goodenia ovata.*

The tropical Climbing Fan Flower, *Scaevola enantophylla* from North East Queensland has opposite leaves that is unusual for a Scaevola and is often shrubby but if it gets a chance to climb it will. This climbing variant was known in the dim dark past as var. *scandens* but now is not recognised as a separate variety. *S. enantophylla* can be a bit problematical to grow in temperate areas because it does need warmth to thrive. It is certainly worth trying in subtropical and tropical regions. How many people are growing it?

Do members know of any other Goodeniaceae members that can act as branch climbers? If so, let Maree know about them.

Although the following plants are not Goodeniaceae I have observed plants which are usually typical or prostrate plants shrubs can also be branch-climbers. Examples include *Chorizema cordatum* and its close relatives *C. varium* and *C. ilicifolium* which can reach over 4 m in height utilising a similar technique. Some *Hibbertia* species such as H. empetrifolia from NSW, Vic and Tas and *H. glossulariaefolia* from WA will also act as branch-climbers and get to over 2 m in height. There are undoubtedly more plants that may have this growth habit.

Goodenia ovata utilised as as a clipped hedge at the Deep Creek Reserve, Pakenham, Victoria

Dampiera purpurea

Text and Photos: Kevin Sparrow

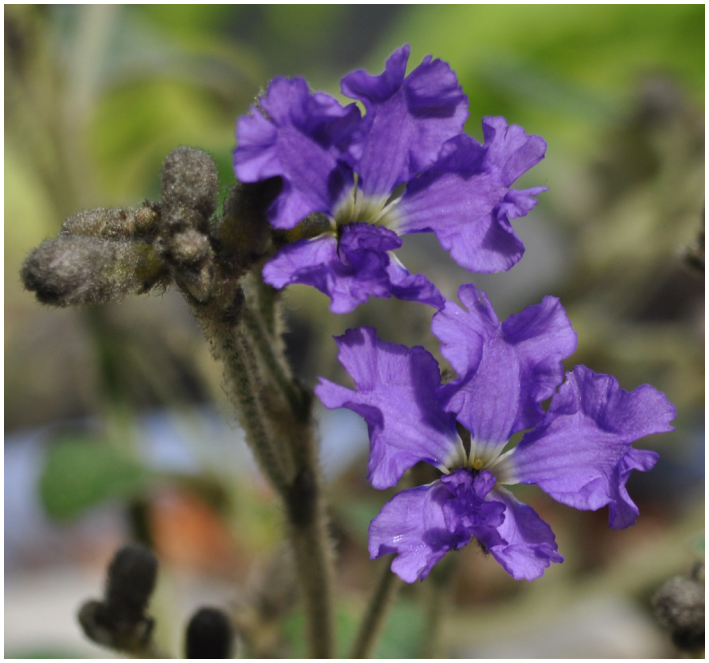
As someone whose record of growing Dampieras is dismal to say the least, I never-the-less was tempted to try them again after the Goodiaceae weekend in Horsham. This time I tried growing them in terracotta pots, the theory being, that the porous clay pots would control the excess moisture from watering that would most likely lead to the demise of the plant. I have had success with other species of plants that like to be very well-drained and Dampiera's are definitely in that category.

One that has done really well for me is *Dampiera purpurea*, this is a lovely plant with deep blue/purple wavy flowers and comes from southern Queensland, New South Wales and eastern Victoria where it grows in eucalypt woodland. It grows to about a metre high and in the ground can spread to two metres across. In a garden environment, it would do best in a sandy soil.

The plant does sucker so this is a great opportunity to put in some cuttings, I have some in and they are looking good so far. A lovely plant well worth trying.

Dampiera purpurea.

Dampiera purpurea.



Dampiera purpurea.

A *Scaevola aemula* Seedling Story

Text and Photos: Rodger Elliot

In 2015 we planted a pink-flowered seedling of *Scaevola aemula* in our small back garden. This plant was a result of a breeding program but it still needed to undergo cultivation trials to ascertain whether it was worth releasing into the nursery trade. It did perform fairly well but like many *Scaevola aemula* plants it succumbed within a couple of years and lost its chance of gaining fame.

We have also planted other selections of *Scaevola aemula* in our back garden and often seedlings pop up in various places. We usually let them flower to see if there may be a plant or two that have potential for cultivation. In most cases they are nothing very different to what is already available so we and the various visiting insects enjoy their floral performance until they succumb.

However, there was much interest and delight in late October when a cluster of foliage began to display white, purple and pink flowers (see picture on right). The initial thought was what an amazing plant with different coloured flowers! Surely that could not be! Yes, further inspection revealed that there were a number of plants in very close proximity and they were producing the different coloured flowers on separate plants.

The pink- and purple-flowered plants did not seem to have much vigour. However, one of the two white-flowered plants has proved exceptional by continuing flowering very well over the summer and is still flowering to this day although it is starting to look a little bit sparse at the beginning of April. One very pleasing aspect is that its white flowers do not gain mauve or purplish tones when the temperatures drop below 20°C as many other white-flowered variants do (see pics). Should be mentioned here that some of the plants which have white flowers that gain mauve to purple colouring can also be very ornamental.

A cluster of *Scaevola aemula* self-sown seedlings in our back garden showing the different flower colours.

Whether or not this new white-flowered seedling proves to be suitable for future release into cultivation time will tell. However, it is a lovely story of what can happen in a small garden. So, keep your eyes peeled in your gardens for seedlings as you never know you find a wonderful plant which could be propagated and spread far and wide where people as well as many insects can enjoy its performance in gardens.

The flowers of the well performed white-flowered self-sown *Scaevola aemula* seedling which does not gain mauve or purplish tones in cool temperatures

A white-flowered self-sown *Scaevola aemula* seedling which gains mauve or purplish tones in cool temperatures

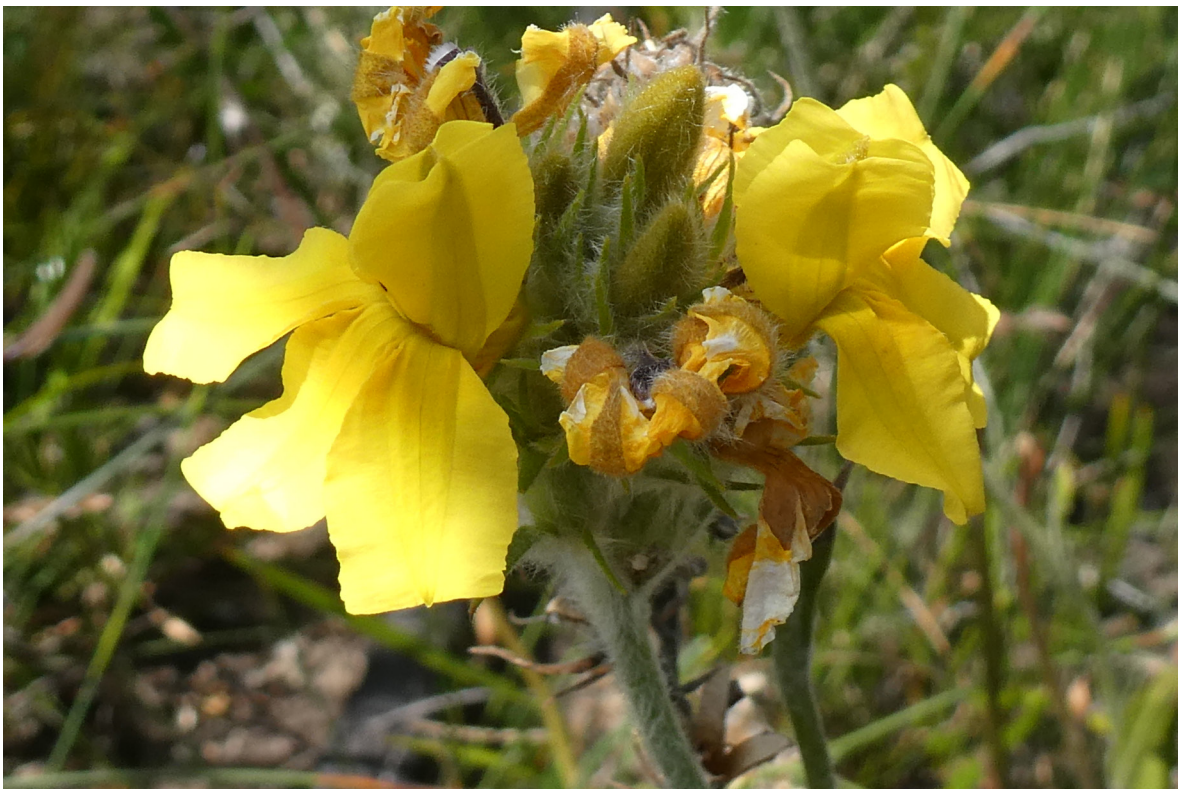
Goodenia glomerata: another pyrogenic species?

Text and Photos: Roger Farrow, ANPS Canberra

Goodenia glomerata, Mt Bushwalker.

In the previous Goodeniaceae newsletter, I reported on the resurgence of Dampiera stricta from seed in Morton NP, following the mega-fire of 2019-2020. I suggested this species was a facultative pyrogenic species since it regenerates in small numbers each year without fire but exhibits mass germination from an accumulated seed bank after the passage of a hot fire and possibly the effects of smoke that break seed dormancy.

On a recent walk to Mt Bushwalker, on the eastern escarpment of Morton NP along the new boardwalk, plant recovery from the mega- fire is proceeding apace with seedlings of shrubs like Banksia ericifolia forming a dense carpet among the dead parents. As we proceeded onto the open rock platforms near the end of the trail, we encountered vast swathes of another low shrub, mostly at a post-flowering stage. The occasional flower identified it as Goodenia glomerata, a species I had never seen before during previous walks in the area but other walkers have noted its presence. It is unlikely that it has regrown from a rootstock like Goodenia bellidifolia (also present) but from a mass germination of seed from the accumulated seed bank following the fire. As the slower-growing shrubs grow up around it, its flowering display is likely to decline in future seasons.



Goodenia glomerata, Mt Bushwalker.

Some of Our Unknown Dampiera

Text and Photos: Royce Raleigh

Dampiera A

This Dampiera has flowered once so far, but has interesting stems and foliage. As you can see from this photo the foliage is quite large and some leaves are in excess of 45mm long.

Dampiera B

This almost leafless Dampiera has not flowered yet and again we have no idea what it is. The stems are quite stiff and almost terete. It appears that there may be the shallowest of tiny grooves along the stem and even a semblance of tiny hairs in the grooves. Another WA Dampiera north of Wongan Hills.

Dampiera C

This Dampiera has been flowering spasmodically right through the summer. Although it had a good late spring flowering I did not take any photos.

It has unusual stems in that they almost circular but with distinct whitish markings in what appear to be very shallow grooves. The marking appears to be very fine hairs covering most of the stem.

This is a photo of the stem and leaf structure. The leaves are quite distinctive so someone should know what it is.

It has a nice dark blue flower – flowers are better and more prolific in spring.

Disappointingly this is one that we lost this summer. It was in an area of the garden that simply got too dry and I was too late to save it. We think we got it originally from Marilyn Sprague but I don't know whether or not she still has it. It was doing so well in the spring.

Some of the others we lost were very fine stemmed ones a bit like Dampiera B above.

Dampiera pedunculata continues to grow well despite the dry summer, but we did manage to give it water through the driest of the season.