

## HIBBERTIA STUDY GROUP

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Among the approximately 130 species of *Hibbertia* found in Australia, there are tall shrubs, low or trailing shrubs and vines bearing a diversity of leaves as to shape and venation pattern. Flowers are solitary, in leafy cymes or in false spikes, and display various gradual and abrupt transitions from vegetation to reproductive appendages. Habits vary from Tropical Savanna through Rain forest margins, wet and dry Sclerophyll forests, heaths, sphagnum swamps and mallee scrub to desert margins. The principal centre of diversity is S.W. Australia, less diverse centres are S.E. and Northern Australia. With respect to leaf size, structure and venation; floral symmetry; and chromosome numbers the diversity found among the species of *Hibbertia* exceeds that found in all but a few genera of Angiosperms, and is greater than that in any other exclusively woody genus.

The great majority of *Hibbertia* species are shrubs, but a few such as *Hibbertia Scandens* and *Hibbertia Dentata* from Eastern Australia are woody vines that clamber over other plants by their twining stems, often reaching several metres above ground.

*Hibbertia* exhibits a striking range of variation with respect to its leaves; size, shape and venation. The majority of *Hibbertias* have medium sized or small leaves, and in many of them the leaves are linear and ericoid or needle like.

Nearly all of the temperate Australian species have solitary flowers, either on the ends of the principal branches or on short lateral leafy shoots. In nearly all of the species the five petals are yellow, obovate and similar in shape. They are usually retuse, notched or weakly bilobed at the apex. A few of the West Australian species such as *Hibbertia Stellaris* and *Hibbertia Miniata* have orange to scarlet flowers. The number of stamens in *Hibbertias* vary from a minimum of four or less to a maximum of 200. Some species have the stamens equally distributed around the carpels, whilst in others they are in clusters or bundles of three to five.

The following description of Hibbertias, and the success by members in growing them should be of interest to all members.

HIBBERTIA SERICEA - A small usually erect, 15 to 60cm high, the branchlets villous. Leaves narrow oblong, margins revolute almost to the Broad Midrib, apex blunt mostly 10mm long, 2 to 4mm broad, young leaves with soft stellate hairs on both surfaces and long simple hairs on the upper surface, old leaves having the upper surface almost glabrous. Flowers terminating very short lateral branches, crowded among the clustered leaves at the ends of the main stems.

This Hibbertia is found in all Eastern States and Tasmania. Several members have this or have had it growing, plants being obtained from the bush, Mrs M Simmonds having one plant for 14 years growing in grey loam, this plant received no watering or fertiliser. So far Hibbertia Sericea has proved difficult to propagate from cuttings Mr and Mrs Kerr having been trying for two years with cuttings every month and various mixes but to date have had no success. From all accounts like numerous other Hibbertias seeds are not available.

HIBBERTIA RIPARIA - An erect or spreading shrub 10 to 60cm high, the branchlets and leaves covered with short stellate hairs, or almost glabrous. Leaves narrow linear, margins broad, apex blunt or submucronate. Flowers sessile or shortly stalked, terminating the numerous short axillary branches. Hibbertia Riparia is found in Tasmania, S.A., Victoria, N.S.W., and Queensland.

Mrs M Simmonds of Tasmania has had two plants since 1969, main flowering period from August to December and at odd occasions other times of the year. These plants are 50cm high by 60cm wide, growing in grey loam with occasional dressings of blood and bone, and receive regular watering during the summer months. Some success has been had with cuttings, unfortunately no details available.

I have a small amount of seeds of Hibbertia Vaginata any member interested please let me know. I would appreciate if any member has any seeds of any species to spare, if they could forward same. If you have had success growing Hibbertias, please forward details as this can be used in newsletters to help other members. The pressed leaf and buds enclosed are from Hibbertia Vaginata a West Australian species, generally a compact shrub which I described in a previous newsletter.