

## HIBBERTIA STUDY GROUP

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The good early rains received in May with the promise of a good winter rainfall gave indication that it would be a good season for wildflowers in the South West of W.A. By early June specs of yellow could be seen in the bushland around the Perth area, these being several Hibbertias namely *H. Hypericoides*, *H. Sub-vaginata* and *H. Racemosa* all of which will continue to flower through winter to spring. As *H. Hypericoides* and *Sub-vaginata* have been previously described *H. Racemosa* will be described in this N/L.

Having spent a large amount of the winter in the sun drenched north of W.A. in the Karratha-Dampier areas was hopeful that I would find some Hibbertias but none were located in this particular area. Numerous acacias, several cassias and along dry creek beds were large numbers of sturt peas which stood out whilst several species of ptilotus provided a colourful spectacle. Unfortunately being away from home didn't do my cuttings any good, amongst them several species of Hibbertias. Also to those of you who I had hoped to send cutting and did not, this was the reason.

I am grateful to Mr. Bob Dixon who is the Horticulturist Advisor at Kings Park for his information on *H. Miniata*, which you should find most interesting. I also obtained some copies of slides which I have added to the slides which are available to members,

### HIBBERTIA MINIATA

Known as the "orange hibbertia" *H. Miniata* shares this colour with the well known *H. Stellaris* and an unnamed species in the Stirling Ranges which closely resembles *H. Miniata*. Flower colour varies considerably, populations which have deep orange flowers with blackish centres (anthers) vary little in colour. However, other populations may have orange to yellow flowers with light centres. Work carried out by Mr G.J. Keighery, Research Botanist, Kings Park and Botanic Gardens, suggests the dark centred forms are self fertile. The plants response to fire varies, in some locations plants were killed by fire whilst in others new shoots appeared from the base of the plant just below ground level, severity of fire may be the key in this case. Seedlings are usually very common after a bush fire.

### Propogation

Seeds - plants may be raised from seed sown in Autumn, germination usually takes 3 to 4 weeks. Occasionally you get germination the first Autumn of sowing, however, after oversummering your seed pot in full sun with no water, the seed germinates well the second autumn after sowing.

Cuttings - Semi-hardwood cuttings taken in the Autumn and Winter strike fairly easy in 5 to 8 weeks. However after potting up the losses are quite high.

Growing On - Unfortunately the plants do not respond very well to growing on in pots, their root system is very susceptible to rotting, especially in badly drained mixes. Potted plants should be grown in shade frames, the best type of shade seems to be broken shade, that is, using venetian blind material or wooden laths. I prefer to plant out small plants during the heavy winter rains, so as to establish them before the onset of hot weather. Although Perth's sandy soils are not suitable for growing, *H. Miniata*, plants can be kept alive for a few years if planted under light broken shade and given the occasional summer watering. Several people are successfully growing *H. Miniata* in the Darling Range near Perth, where the soils are a lot heavier. The oldest plant I know of in cultivation lived for 5 years. *H. Miniata* is known to grow naturally only in the Northern Jarrah Forrest near Wannamal north of Perth, Western Australia. Most of the known populations are in danger of extinction as they either occur on private land which is likely to be cleared for agriculture purposes, or on road verges. However, I may add several Farmers are interested in preserving populations on their properties. It should be noted that *H. Miniata* growing in its natural state is quite rare and is listed in the W.A. Government Gazette, November, 1980 as rare flora.

The habitat of *H. Miniata* is usually amongst and under 'Marri' *Eucalyptus calophylla* other plants which often grow in association are *H. Lineata*, *H. Lasiopus*, *Dryanda Polycephala*, *Hypocalymma*, *Angustifolia*, *Grevillea Synapheae*, *Pimelea Rosea* (white form) *Melaleuca Scabra*, *Petrophile Media* and *Xanthorrhoea*. *Hibbertia miniata* grows in loamy to sandy lateritic soil usually over a fairly solid base of laterite. The PH varies from 5.7 to 6.3. The habit of the plant varies, in an open area, young plants are often bushy and spreading, older shrubs are upright in growth forming in an open shrub with only a few main branches. Although the height of the plant is usually between 20 and 40cm the tallest specimen I have seen was about 80cm high in an area which obviously had been burnt for many years.

Note: Dr. Hougland who was at the research school of biological sciences in Canberra had successfully propagated and grown *H. Miniata* Canberra.

#### HIBBERTIA RACEMOSA

A small compact shrub 45cm across x 20cm high, linear leaves 30mm in length by 5mm wide. The flowers on peduncles, Stamens in bundles of 2, 3 or 5 with single stamen separate, flowering period can commence early winter through spring at its peak early spring, with odd flowers throughout the year. Mainly found in sand around the Perth area close to the beach in sand dunes and limestone, away from the coast in grey sand, in open to light shade. Some of the associated vegetation are *eucalyptus Gomphocephala* (tuart) *banksia attenuate*, *B. menziesii*, *anigozanthos humilus - manglesii*, *hibbertias*, *hypericoides*, *sub-vaginata* and *Huegelii*, *hypocalymma*, *robustum*, *pimelea rosea*, *lysinema cilatum*, and *petrophile linearis*.

*Hibbertia racemosa* can be propagated by cutting with reasonable success. Seeds are quite small and difficult to find, I have noticed in areas that have been cleared numerous plants appear, quite often large numbers in an area about the size of a jam tin, away from parent plants, the seeds possibly carted there by ants, the same as *H. sub-vaginata* which this plant closely resembles.

Another *Hibbertia* which grows near the coast is *H. cuneiformis*. It is interesting to note that it is grown indoors in the royal botanic gardens in Kew in the Australian section also in the open in Channel Islands, Cornwall, Southern France, Italy and California. *H. cuneiformis* is undoubtedly the most commonly cultivated species from W.A. and grows quite successfully in the E.S.

#### HIBBERTIA CUNEIFORMIS

Is an erect bushy shrub from coastline localities in the Darling, Warren, Stirling and Eyre Districts of W.A. in bushland and limestone. The showy yellow flowers from August to February are 20mm across with stamens around the carpel, the flowers surrounded by foliage. Leaves are crowded towards the ends of the branchlets, leaving circular scars on the stems when they drop off. The leaves obovate to lanceolate being approximately 30mm x 12mm, slightly toothed and a fresh green colour. Plants grow up to 2m high with a similar spread. Can be seen grown in association with (Tuart) *E. Gomphocephala* *Agonis flexosa*, *Banksia attenuata* and *Menziesii* in open to medium shade. Can be propagated quite readily from cuttings, and seeds which are about 1mm in diameter germinate quite readily under plants.

#### HIBBERTIA SCANDENS

From Queensland and N.S.W. is another *Hibbertia* that can be found growing close to the coast in an exposed situation in sand. A vigorous prostrate 20cm or climber with robust stems, new growth rather fleshy. Leaves 3 to 6cm long, bright green lance-shaped, slightly stem clasping hairy below, shining above. Gold yellow flowers 6cm in diameter and numerous stamens around the carpels, flowers most of the year, at its peak in summer. *H. scandens* can be cultivated in most states, though flowering is not as profuse in colder areas. *H. scandens* is quite readily propagated by cuttings. It appears from reports that it is rather slow growing in the cooler climate of Tasmania.

Hibbertias requiring descriptions:

- H. Australis - Vic.
- H. Andrewsiana - W.A.
- H. Corifolia ?
- H. Crassifolia - W.A.
- H. Dentata - N.S.W., QLD., Vic.
- H. Dealbata ?
- H. Grossulari folia - W.A.
- H. Lineris - N.S.W.
- H. Longifolia ?
- H. Pachyrrhiza - W.A.

I would like to welcome to our Group Trevor Sadler.

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