

# GOING, GOING...GONE!

**A handbook of unique native flora that is disappearing in Grenfell and surrounds.**



This booklet has been developed in collaboration with Weddin Community Native Nursery, Weddin Landcare & Local Land Services & our local expert Noel Cartwright.

45 East St. Grenfell

Phone: 0456879481



Local Land  
Services  
Central West



Dominic Nowlan : 6349120

## **GOING, GOING, GONE!**

The aim of this publication is to raise awareness of both our local residents and visitors to our area regarding plants that are quickly disappearing from our region. These beautiful native species were once common in our local region and some forms of these plants have been found nowhere else. Sadly it would appear that some have all but gone now. This is mainly as a result of predation and ground degradation by feral goats, rabbits and pigs. Groups such as the Weddin Wanders, Local Landcarers, Birding NSW and seed collectors from the Weddin Community Native Nursery spend regular time roaming our local bushland and yet have not been able to locate these once common plants. Many of the plants listed here are actually unique to this area. Some of these plants have been identified and registered by our local native plant elder Noel Cartwright. They have been given names which reflect their uniqueness to our local area. E.g. "The Brundah Mint Bush" and "Grevillia lanigera ssp Grenfell form."

As well as demonstrating the variety and richness of our local flora, these plants would have played a vital role in the ecological community. As we know when we lose any of the plants or animals from an ecological community, the delicate balance of life is interrupted and we lose valuable genetic diversity. We do know the role that some of these plants may have played in the local ecosystem and we may never know what insect, bird or animal is threatened by the loss of these plants.

The purpose of raising awareness of these "missing plants" is so that all those who are exploring in and around Grenfell and surrounds may be able to help us in locating a specimen of one of these plants. The WCNN (Weddin Community Native Nursery) can then attempt to propagate and preserve these plants for use in both gardens and wildlife corridors. Hopefully by undertaking this process we can in some way preserve these plants. By informing residents and visitors to our area, we will have more chance of success in this endeavour. The Brundah Mint bush is an example of how we have been able to locate, protect and propagate a beautiful and highly predated shrub. The WCNN now has a "Mother Plant" from which we have successfully propagated a number of plants.

Often the only places these plants will be found now are deep in rocky crevices or on vertical rock outcrops where predators cannot reach. What do you do if you locate one of these plants? If possible please take a GPS location of the plant or if you do not have a GPS then try as best you can to note any landmarks nearby and your general location so that it might be possible to locate the plant again. The next step is to notify either the WCNN or Local Land Services whose contact details are on the front page of this publication. Please do not attempt to remove the plant or any part of it. We are hoping that together we can make a difference in preserving our local flora.

## *Philotheca myoporoides* or 'Wax Flower'



The Long-leaf Waxflower (*Philotheca myoporoides*) of Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria, is a hardy large shrub with a long flowering season of small but showy pale flowers set amid a firm mid-green foliage. It is a hardy plant that will thrive through cold and drought. It is often wider than its height and is very dense in growth right down to ground level. It anchors well and, as the branches are flexible and tough, is not liable to breakage in strong winds.

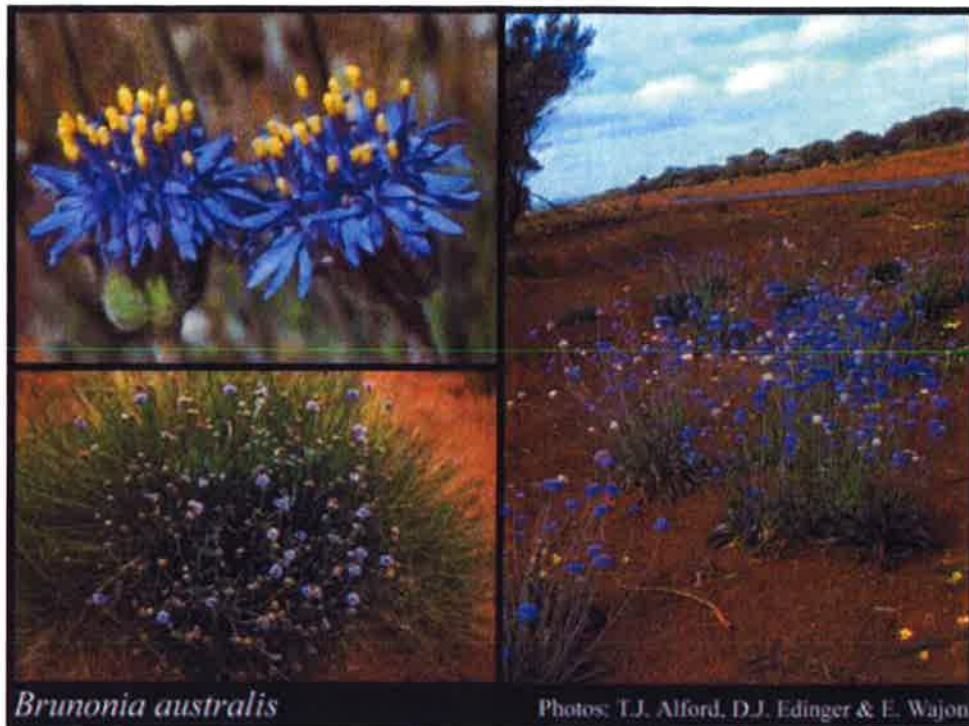


The narrow leaves are of a slightly waxy appearance up to 8 cm long and held out at a wide angle from the stem in an open, alternate arrangement. In the axils of each are heads of the flowers in groups of from three to five buds, well held out on one centimetre-long stems, even when only a few are open. Buds of apple-blossom pink open to flat, starry flowers with five white petals. The flowers are no more than 2 centimetres across but show out well against the green foliage. In Canberra the first buds open about the end of June, gradually increasing through the winter depending on the season - until early September when the shrub will be dotted with flowers. Best months are usually October and November when flowering is profuse down to ground level. Odd flowers may appear in summer and autumn.

Noel says of this plant: "She also is a victim of goats. Once found everywhere it is now very hard to locate. I've seen our local form grow to 1.5m x 1.5m. Five petalled star-like white flowers, pink in bud; thrives in any well-drained soil, in full sun or partial shade. Leaves produce a very strong bush odour when disturbed. Hope she doesn't miss this race for survival!!! "



## *Brunonia australis* or 'Blue Pincushion Plant'



*Brunonia australis* was once wide spread in our local area but has not been seen for a number of years. It is a perennial herb, with a cluster of elliptical leaves at the base. The leaves are about 10 cm long. The flowers occur on 20 - 30cm high stems arising from the basal leaves of the plant. While the individual flowers are small they occur in hemispherical clusters of 50 or more, each cluster being about 30 mm in diameter. The flower colour is mid to deep blue and flowers are usually seen in spring but may also occur sporadically, extending through to autumn. Seed collection and propagation is not difficult and the plants can be treated as annuals. This plant likes dry to moist well drained soils in woodlands in dappled light and will grow in full sun or partial shade. It can be very attractive mass planted in rockeries, in a drift or at the base of trees. It is a butterfly attracting plant providing nectar for our native butterflies.

## *Ricinocarpos bowmanii* or 'Pink Wedding Bush'



*Ricinocarpos bowmanii* is a delightful small shrub which is ideally suited to growing in a rockery, as a specimen plant, or against a background of taller shrubs. In spring and early summer the whole bush is conspicuously laden with clusters of starry white or pale pink flowers which have inspired the name of 'Pink Wedding Bush'. Noel Cartwright took an expert from the Burrendong Arbortemum to view our local version of this plant a number of years ago. He stated that the local version was superior with larger flowers and leaves. However this little shrub has not been sited locally for a number of years. *R. bowmanii* is found in woodlands and on hillsides. It is a stiff rounded shrub growing to 1 m high by 1 m across with slender branches. The narrow olive-green leaves are alternate, to 20 mm long, with margins which are usually recurved to the midrib. The under surfaces of the leaves are paler with closely matted short hairs.

The flowers have 5 spreading petals and are unisexual having separate male and female flowers on the same plant. The male flowers are produced in terminal clusters of 3 to 6 whilst the female flowers are borne alone or within the male clusters. The fruit is a globular capsule which splits open when ripe to release 3 mottled seeds.

This desirable plant is hardy, drought resistant and moderately frost resistant. For successful cultivation it requires a sheltered, well drained position in full sun or part shade. It likes soils of low fertility in dry sclerophyll forest and mallee communities or on rocky outcrops. Tip cuttings of half-ripened wood should be taken between January and March and can take up to eight weeks to strike. Cuttings should be treated with a hormone to promote root growth.

## *Cyphanthera albicans* or 'Grey Ray Flower'



Wrigley & Fagg.

The Grey Ray Flower grows on rocky slopes in dark sandy soils derived from igneous rocks. Though usually found growing in shrub land on exposed sites, it also occurs occasionally in dry sclerophyll forest. This subspecies is a beautiful pendulous shrub, 2 m high by 2 m wide, with a whitish downy covering of hairs on the leaves and young branches. The leaves are almost without stalks, ovate or elliptic to oblong in shape, 18-25 mm long and 3-6 mm wide. Compared to the other subspecies (namely subsp. *albicans* and subsp. *tomentosa*) this one is particularly floriferous. The flowers, produced in spring and early summer, are pale yellow to creamy white with purple streak within the short tubular base or corolla. The individual flowers, which are starlike in appearance, can vary from 13 to 22 mm in length, with the narrow petals spreading to 20 mm wide. They are borne in the axils of the upper leaves in clusters of two or three. The fruit is a small, smooth, egg-shaped or globular capsule, opening from the apex by four valves.

Propagation is by cuttings taken in mid-summer and placed in a well-drained cutting mix under moderate humidity. With the use of a softwood rooting hormone, a strike rate above 50 per cent can be expected.

This beautiful little shrub was once common around our area however the last examples of this plant were sited growing on cliff faces a few years ago. Our local version has more creamy coloured flowers than is generally found.

## The Grenfell form of *Grevillea lanigera*.



Photo: Peter Olde.

This was once the jewel in the crown of our local grevillea species. *Grevillea lanigera* Grenfell form is quite different both in structure and colour from the *Grevillea lanigera* which is generally known. This plant was first noticed by Noel Cartwright a number of years ago who then went to the trouble of having it identified and recorded. It was initially called *Grevillea ericifolia* but was later renamed *lanigera*. There is still some conjecture over its name. Members of WCNN have been on the lookout for a specimen of this lovely grevillea for the last two years. As yet there has been no sighting of it. Last sighting of this plant was on the Cowra side of Grenfell.

The following quote was taken from the "Society of Associations for Growing Australian Plants" newsletter no. 55 in 2000 under the heading of "Field Trip '99 Blue Mountains and Beyond." "Our last day was spent heading first to Bumberry where we found a soon-to-be named *Grevillea* species (aff. *linearifolia*) growing beside the railway track with *G. floribunda* ssp. *floribunda*. Then onward to Yambira SF and many points between Grenfell and Cowra where we unsuccessfully searched for *G. polybractea* and *G. lanigera*. I was disappointed not to find this last species because it appears to be a very distinct form. The name *G. ericifolia* was named from this population. However, rain and lack of information stood between us and the search was abandoned at about 3 o'clock and we turned for home."

This is a description of this grevillea in Noel's words: "The Grenfell form of *Grevillia lanigera* grows to about 40 cm high & 80cm across, with narrow linear, grey, pubescent leaves and brilliant pink & cream flowers. This most delightful shrub was first found to the east of Grenfell and first grown at Burrendong Arboretum. It has become harder to locate in recent years. It is quite different to other forms of *grevillia lanigera*."



## *Correa reflexa* or 'Native Fuchsia'



Photo: Brian Walters

*Correa reflexa* is the most widespread member of the genus and the most variable. It is typically a small shrub to about 1 metre in height but prostrate forms and forms reaching 3 metres are also known. Leaves often have conspicuous oil glands on their surface and may be covered with short hairs. The leaves are 10 to 50 mm long and oval shaped. In some forms the leaves bend back against the stem giving the appearance of water stress.

The flowers are bell shaped and up to 40mm long. They may be pale green, red, red with yellow or cream tips or a number of other variations. The Grenfell form has pale yellow flowers. The flowers produce nectar and attract honey eating birds. Flowering is usually winter to early spring.

This delicate shrub was once common in our area but has been decimated by feral goats. It is occasionally spotted in rocky crevices where the goats can't reach it.

It is a desirable garden plant that requires a well-drained position in semi shade favoured. It can be propagated from cutting.



## *Kunzea parvifolia* or 'Purple Heath'



Photo Brian Walters

Once common in our area the *Kunzea parvifolia* is now rarely seen. It is usually a erect shrub to about 1 metre in height, however, a prostrate form has also been in cultivation for many years. The leaves are small (usually less than 5 mm long). The small pinks to mauve flowers are clustered into globular-shaped heads at the ends of the branches and are very profuse and conspicuous. The flowers are followed by small 1-celled fruits which release numerous small seeds when ripe. It withstands at least moderate frost. It offers habitat and protection to small birds because of its compact heath-like structure.



## **Prostanthera ovalifolia or Brundah Mint Bush (Grenfell Form)**



The Brundah Mint Bush is a form of this shrub which is unique to our area. Once it was found in a variety of colours ranging from white through to a variety of shades of pink and purple. Sadly it has been heavily predated by goats. As part of this “Plants that Matter” project WCNN is undertaking to fence off a stand of the purple mint bush on a private property. The owner of the property is very keen to preserve our native flora and we thank him for his generosity in allowing us to try and protect a stand of this beautiful plant. WCNN has a mother plant of the purple form of the Brundah Mint Bush and we have been able to propagate a number of plants for sale. This has been thanks to the skills and dedication of Dennis Simpson and is an example of how we may be able to slowly bring these plants “back from the brink” in our area. There is a possibility that Dennis may have been able to propagate a pink form of this plant but it is not an easily propagated plant and at the time of the printing of this booklet we are not sure if it has been successful.

The Brundah Mint Bush loves the seepages and moist conditions of rocky creek gullies so the drying climate as well as goats has probably had an impact of this delicate plant. It is typically a medium shrub to about 2.5 metres high. The leaves may be lance-shaped to almost circular as well as oval shaped and are up to about 15mm long and are highly aromatic. The flowers are usually purple or mauve but pink and white coloured forms are also known. Flowering occurs in spring and is usually prolific with the flowers almost obscuring the foliage. The scent of the leaves is delicious. WCNN are particularly looking for other colour forms of this plant. Keep your eyes open for us please.

## *Crowea exalata* or 'Waxflower'



*Crowea exalata* is a small, variable plant ranging from almost prostrate forms to shrubs up to a metre or more high. It has narrow leaves from 15 to 50 mm long which are dotted with oil glands. Flowers are 5-petalled and usually range from pale to mid pink in colour although white forms are known. The flowers are up to 25 mm in diameter and appear in late summer through to mid-winter. It was once found in many spots around our local area but sadly not now. Our drying climate may be one of the impacts on this pretty little plant. The WCNN has managed to get a few cuttings of this little plant. We are hoping it will be successfully propagated.

In cultivation, *C.exalata* prefers a well-drained position in sun or semi shade. It prefers moist soils but will tolerate extended dry periods once established.

It can be found in open forests and woodlands.

