
TREATING *TEPHROSIA* (FABACEAE) FOR THE EFLORA OF AUSTRALIA: PROJECT PROGRESS AND PLANS

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Tephrosia Pers. is a widespread and common component of the northern Australian flora, yet its taxonomy is largely unresolved and few identification tools exist. In part this results from relatively poor knowledge of the flora of northern Australia (e.g. few specimens of many taxa; collection gaps; unstudied morphological diversity), in part from the size of the genus, and in part from fragmentation of previous effort. The genus has not been treated Australia-wide since Bentham's *Flora Australiensis*.

With c. 140 native taxa recognised in northern and central Australia, *Tephrosia* (Fabaceae: Millettieae) is the largest legume genus in Australia excepting *Acacia* Mill. While 21 names (16 tax. nov.) have been published for Australian taxa since 1977, 62 phrase names (c. 45% of all taxa) are presently recognised in the APC—*Tephrosia* has one of the highest proportions of phrase-named taxa of any large genus in Australia. Siloed research has built local expertise but led to taxonomic duplication and inter-state inconsistencies. Herbarium visits have identified 15 informally-named taxa as having multiple names across institutions; most are now reconciled in the APC, but AVH maps show some informal taxa have distributions truncated at state borders, indicating inaccurate synonymies and occurrence statements in the APC still. Additional 'in-house' names and concepts also require consolidation.

Recent collaborative research has resulted in substantial growth in knowledge, especially in Western Australia. In particular, many informally named taxa are now well-characterised and resolved across state borders. This has provided the springboard for this project, which proposes to:

- formally name and describe the c. 40 phrase-named taxa that occur in Western Australia and the Northern Territory—this includes taxa that are shared between these regions and neighbouring states,
- provide a revisionary eFlora of Australia treatment for all taxa in Western Australia and the Northern Territory (c. 90), and
- construct a key to all taxa in Australia (c. 150).

This project will establish the framework for the treatment of *Tephrosia* in Queensland (& New South Wales) in the future—60% of APC-listed taxa occur in Queensland and c. 35% are endemic, including 26 phrase-named taxa. These numbers are a reflection of long-term taxonomic effort there. This presentation will give an overview of the project and progress to date, highlight a number of areas where resolution of taxa is hampered by gaps in knowledge and data delivery, and discuss future directions.



Ryonen Butcher is a plant taxonomist at the Western Australian Herbarium, and has concentrated on the resolution and description of species in south-west Western Australia, primarily from the families Proteaceae, Fabaceae and Elaeocarpaceae. She is presently employed on an ABRS research grant to investigate the pan-tropical genus *Tephrosia* (Fabaceae) in northern and central Australia. Ryonen is a member of the 'Nuytsia' editorial team, and an ASBS councillor.



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