

A new species of *Billardiera* (Pittosporaceae) from south-west Western Australia

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Abstract

Bennett, E. M. A new species of *Billardiera* (Pittosporaceae) from south-west Western Australia. Nuytsia 4(3):275-277 (1983). *Billardiera mollis*, a new species allied to *B. villosa* and confined to the Ravensthorpe region is described and illustrated.

Billardiera mollis E. Bennett, sp. nov. (Figure 1)

Frutex effusus humilis. *Folia* alterna, ovato-lanceolata vel ovata, 10-20 x 7-11 mm hirsuta. *Flores* solitarii (raro 2), axillares. *Petala* caerulea, 12-15 x 3-6 mm, apice recurva. *Antherae* albae; filamenta 6-8 (10) mm longa, basi latiora, apicibus antrorsis. *Ovarium* hirsutum, 2.5-3.5 mm longum. *Capsula* longe hirsuta; *semina* 1.5-2 mm longa, atro-brunnea, laevia, nitida.

Typus: North-east slope of the southern ridge of the Ravensthorpe Range, Western Australia, 16 Sept. 1979, E. M. Bennett 16979 (holo: PERTH; iso: CANB, K, MEL).

Low, spreading *shrub* to 50 cm tall; *young stems* reddish-brown, white hirsute, becoming grey-brown with age and hairs rubbing off. *Leaves* alternate, ovate to lanceolate-ovate, mucronate, 10-20 x 7-11 mm, both surfaces of young leaves long white hirsute, becoming glabrous with age, hairs semi-persistent along margin and midvein, margins flat, petiole 0.75-1 mm long. *Flowers* solitary (rarely 2), axillary; *flowering peduncles* slender, 15-25 mm long, deep blue with scattered long and short white hairs; *fruiting peduncles* 15-25 mm long, green or greenish-brown, hirsute. *Bracts* at base of peduncle lanceolate-linear, 0.75-1.25 mm, dark-blue covered in long and short white hairs. *Sepals* free, narrow-lanceolate, dark blue, hirsute. *Petals* dark blue or blue with 3 or 4 fine distinct purple lines on outer surface, pale blue or nearly white in throat, 12-15 x 3-6 mm, recurved 3-5 mm from tip. *Anthers* 0.75-1 mm long, white, *filaments* 6-8 (10) mm long, whitish green, dilated at base, tip curved forwards. *Ovary* hirsute, 2.5-3.5 mm long; *style* 1.5-2 mm long, glabrous. *Capsules* covered with long white hairs, 7-14 x 5-7 mm long; *seeds* 1.5-2 mm, dark brown, smooth, shiny.

Other specimens examined. North-east slope of the southern ridge of the Ravensthorpe Range, E. M. Bennett 51179 (PERTH); Carlingup Road, Rabbit Proof Fence No. 1, 4.4 km south of this intersection, November 1981, J. Lewis s.n. (PERTH).

Distribution. South-west of Western Australia. Occurring in the Ravensthorpe Range from near Mount Desmond south of Kundip. It has also been collected 35 km east of the Range from the vicinity of the Rabbit Proof Fence No. 1.

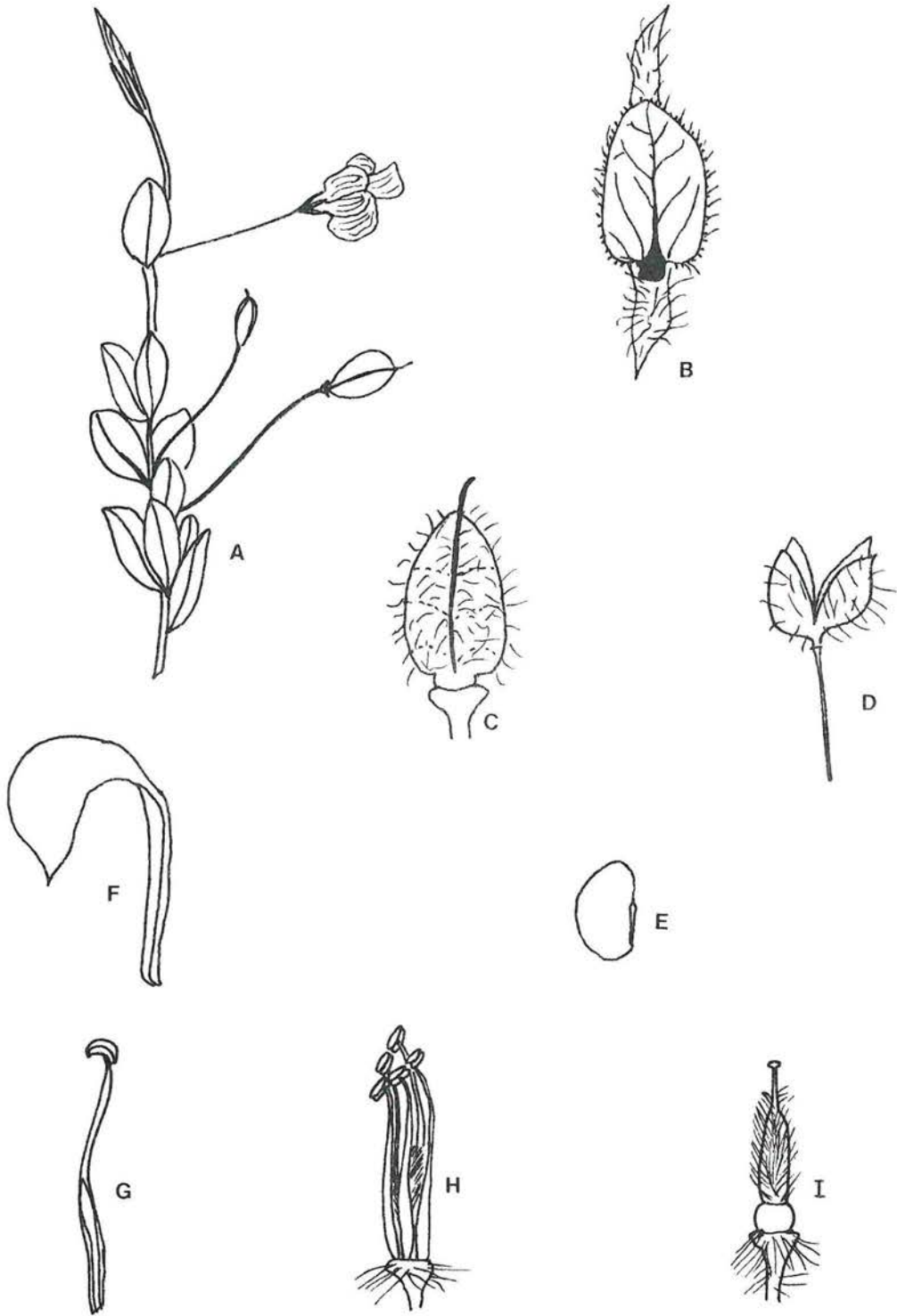


Figure 1. *Billardiera mollis*. A—Flowers and young fruits (nat. size). B—Leaf (x2). C—Young capsule (x3). D—Mature fruit (x1.5). E—Seed (x10). F—Recurved petal (x3). G—Stamen (x3). H—Stamens all turning the same way (x3). I—Hirsute ovary (x3).

All drawn from *E. M. Bennett* 16979 (the type).

Habitat. Seems to be confined to lateritic soils. Associated vegetation include *Casuarina acutivalvis*, *Dryandra quercifolia*, *Hakea obtusa*, *Acacia* sp. nov., *Beaufortia schaueri*, *Eucalyptus incrassata*, *E. tetragona*, *Melaleuca glaberrima*, *Leucopogon sprengelioides*.

Flowering and fruiting period. Flowers from August to September. Mature seeds have been collected from late November to mid-December.

Discussion. This species differs from the other *Billardiera* species which have a capsule as the fruit in that it has a pubescent capsule, all the other species have a glabrous capsule. The species it most closely resembles is *B. villosa*, but *B. mollis* differs in its habit, being straggly not compact, the margins of the leaves being flat not recurved, the anthers being white not blue and the ovary and capsule being pubescent not glabrous. The foliage of the new species may be readily confused with *Daviesia mollis* which grows in the vicinity, but not sympatrically.

Conservation status. Using the criteria adopted by Leigh et al. (1981) the new species is placed in the category 2K.

References

- Bennett, E. M. (1972). New taxa and new combinations in Western Australian Pittosporaceae. *Nuytsia* 1: 266-269.
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- Leigh, J., Briggs, J. and Hartley, W. (1981). 'Rare or Threatened Australian plants.' Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, Special Publication No. 7, pp. 178 (Canberra.)