

Hypocalymma longifolium: A species refound and a mystery solved

Hypocalymma longifolium was described by Ferdinand von Mueller in 1860 from a collection made by Oldfield around the Murchison River. The species was thought not to have been re-collected since the type, and has been listed as presumed extinct in State and Federal lists of threatened plants.

However, for some years a pink flowered, long leaved *Hypocalymma* of unknown origin has been grown as *Hypocalymma longifolium* throughout Australia.

During studies undertaken for a review of the genus for the Flora of Australia, we were able to study the type of *H. longifolium*, and determined it was related to *H. angustifolium* (white or swamp Myrtle) and not *H. strictum* as previously thought.

Comparison of the cultivated material and herbarium collections showed that the cultivated "*H. longifolium*" is an undescribed subspecies of *H. strictum* (with long leaves and pink flowers) which is restricted to the area between the Stirling Ranges and Wellstead. This may in itself prove to be an endangered taxon, but that was one mystery solved.

Checking through the *Hypocalymma angustifolium* folders, we located a collection made by W.E. Blackall in 1932, of what was undoubtedly *H. longifolium*. The collection was made according to the label between Northampton and Lynton. However, since it was made over 50 years ago, the species remained as presumed extinct.

Again fortune smiled, and I was able to accompany those two Bon Vivants of the Flora Conservation Program, Ron Sokolowski and David Coates, on a rigorous trip to the area. (This included dinner with the Hon. Tim Fisher, federal leader of the National Party, who thought Ron was Joe prematurely reincarnated - but that's another story.) We assumed that any decent *Hypocalymma* related to *H. angustifolium* would grow in swamps, and after a few detours we found a very large population of *Hypocalymma longifolium* in one of the uncleared springs north-east of Port Gregory.

If a reserve can be created for the now declared endangered *H. longifolium* its future will be more secure.

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