

Karijini - a blooming delight

During the month of August Bob Bromilow, Phil Fuller and myself spent 10 days working within the Karijini National Park resampling permanent quadrats as part of an ongoing Fire Ecology research project designed to investigate the effect of fire on mulga woodland communities. During this trip, while Phil was off chasing birds, Bob and I were resampling the twenty four 100 m² vegetation quadrats that we have established. This sampling period, our third, was most rewarding as we were able to collect flowering specimens of taxa that had previously been identified as either Genus sp. nov. or even Family sp. nov. We also confirmed the identification of several other taxa which we were having difficulty with determining in

their sterile state. These identifications were achieved as a result of the exceptionally good rains received in the Hamersley Range over the first six months of this year. During the trip 19 new taxa were recorded within the quadrats, all being annuals. This takes the list of plant taxa recorded within quadrats to approximately 350.

Apart from the abundance of flowering *Ptilotus* species, other interesting finds were a population of burrowing bees near Coppin Pool and perhaps a new species of *Indigofera* from the West Angelas area. Collections were also made from two new localities of a rare *Eremophila* species endemic to the Hamersley Range.

On our trip back to Karratha we stopped at Millstream and collected samples of a new *Papilidium* species which appears to be endemic to the Fortescue River in the vicinity of Millstream. This species has only been collected on two previous occasions, once in 1969 by Ian Brooker and again in 1976 by Greg Keighery. With the help of Ranger, Geoff Kregor and PhD student Launa Charlton, a population of several thousand plants was located in the 'couch paddock'.

Although the winds caused the daytime temperatures to drop far below what us northern researchers are accustomed to, the trip was very productive and the original goals were adequately fulfilled.

Steve van Leeuwen