

AFTER zigzagging our way down through the inland, our great Grevillea discovery trip then headed south to the wonderful Fitzgerald River National Park. Along Hammersley Drive we soon located *Grevillea tripartita*—they were only young plants as vast areas of the park had been burnt out by wildfires in the last couple of years. This Grevillea normally grows to several metres in height and has masses of large orange and yellow flowers for many months of the year. Not much further on the road drops down and crosses West River – here the soils change to granite and immediately we came upon *G. rigida*, a species with stiff prickly leaves and bright red toothbrush flowers for much of the year.

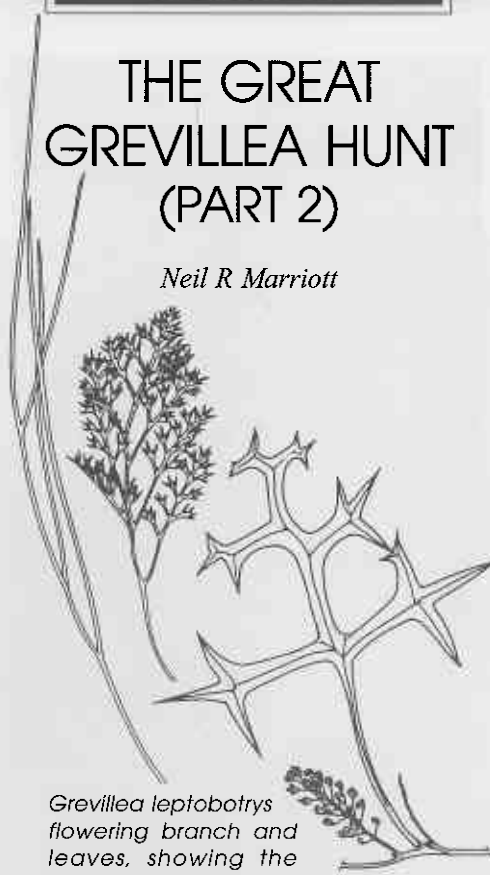
On the Quoin Head Track we came upon deeply divided-leaf specimens of the Comb-leaf Grevillea *G. pectinata* with attractive pink flowers. Further on as we ascended a low heathy ridge we came upon one of the National Parks endemics, *G. fistulosa*. These were erect shrubs to around 1m with masses of showy orange-red flowers with curious tiny yellow styles. As we approached Quoin Head we came upon *G. nudiflora*. These were low spreading shrubs to around 0.3m x 1m with narrow leaves and red and yellow flowers on long leafless stems running in all directions along the ground.

One of the Grevilleas Peter Olde and I have been searching for for quite a few years has previously only been recorded from Doubtful Island, off the coast at the western end of the Park. We felt that it would be worthwhile checking out the mainland adjacent to the island just in case! This entailed travelling along a rough and at times treacherous 4WD track out to Hood Point – outside the Park and the home of a tumble of run down fishermen's shacks. The entire coastline along this part of the West is spectacular, and Hood Point was no exception. No sooner had we

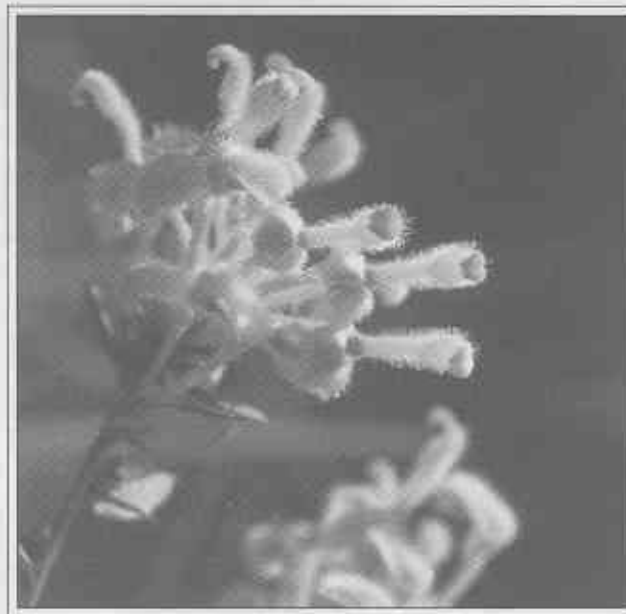
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THE GREAT GREVILLEA HUNT (PART 2)

Neil R Marriott



Grevillea leptobotrys flowering branch and leaves, showing the variability.



Grevillea candolleana.

driven up on to the high headland above the beach than we came upon big rounded Grevilleas with beautiful large bright red toothbrush flowers. Here, without any need for painstaking searching was another new and beautiful Grevillea species! From high up on the headland, the

view looking back along the coastline is breathtaking – crystal clear azure-blue water, dazzling white beaches and pristine green bushland make for a memorable sight. Why this huge area is not in the National Park is beyond me!

We went on to Albany and then west along the Muir Highway where we found a beautiful prostrate form of *G. depauperata*. This name was given to the species by Robert Brown and we are not exactly sure what he was referring to. The name 'depauperata' means 'starved or reduced', possibly in reference to the sparse foliage or open habit of many forms. At this site however the plants formed beautiful low mats with massed displays of brilliant fiery red flowers. In my garden it has become one of my most spectacular groundcovers.

A recently described species, the Lake Unicup Grevillea *G. acropogon* is a very rare and localised species from near Lake Unicup west of Frankland. We had searched for this species previously, only to find that the location we had been given was incorrect. This time we were determined to find it and came armed with a GPS unit so we could pinpoint the location. We scoured the site, finding a beautiful form of *G. leptobotrys* with deeply divided very fine foliage and showy racemes of bright pink flowers. But alas there was no Unicup Grevillea, despite standing on the exact GPS site as given to us by botanists from Canberra!

Reluctant to admit defeat, but now running short of time, we headed off to the Mitchell River, in the heart of the wet Karri Forests. Here an unusual divided leaf form of *G. diversifolia* ssp. *subtersericata* had been recorded. We searched the area, finding many plants, as well as *G. trifida* – low shrubby form - and *G. quercifolia* the Oak-leaf Grevillea with its beautiful long toothed leaves and showy pinky-mauve flowers.

We then headed back through Frankland to investigate a broad

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leaf form of *G. trifida*, which had been recorded on a road reserve to the east of that town. On arrival at the site we immediately found the plant and just as immediately realised that here we had a most distinct new subspecies of *G. trifida*. The new plant had very coarse, leathery wedge shaped leaves, was only around 0.3 m high and was suckering vigorously through the grassy undergrowth. At this site we also found *G. pulchella* ssp. *ascendens*, while a little further up the road we found another lovely form of *G. leptobotrys*.

Continuing our dash back north we wanted to find a most unusual simple leaf form of *G. leptobotrys* in Monadnocks Conservation Park between the Albany Highway and the Brookton Highway. At the turnoff on the Albany Highway we found a population of *G. manglesii* ssp. *dissecta*, including several with attractive pink flowers. Heading east into the Marri forest we stumbled on a population of *G. pimelioides*. Growing to around 1 metre they formed attractive rounded shrubs with massed yellow and orange flowers, with several characteristics that may warrant the recognition of this population as a distinct subspecies. We then headed along Qualen Rd where we located the amazing simple-leaf form of *G. leptobotrys*, looking the spitting image of a clump of grass!! Anyone not seeing the plants in flower would certainly be fooled. This also will most likely finish up as a new subspecies.

Another suspected new *Grevillea* species had been collected in the hills to the west of York. We were keen to locate it and eventually did so on Gunapin Ridge. The plants were lightly scattered through the open forest, and were full of fine white flowers. They formed sparse open shrubs, with bushy bases topped with long lanky flowering branches up to 2m and occasionally even 3m in height. They were clearly a new species, with closest affinities to *G. acrobotrya* from way up near Mt Lesueur north of Badgingarra! At another population nearby we also found several attractive pink flowered forms, as well as the rare *G.*

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Grevillea candolleana in a Toodyay road verge.

scabra, *G. synapheae* ssp. *synapheae*, and numerous other showy shrubs.

At the risk of wasting time on a wild goose chase we headed east through York to investigate yet another supposed new *Grevillea* species recorded at the base of the Needling Hills. Sadly most of this area is now cleared, and what is not cleared is infested with invasive exotic annual grasses. Not exactly the best location to look for new species! However we checked out every road, track and patch of bush in the area and eventually discovered a gravel reserve with relatively intact native casuarina woodland vegetation. Here we found not a new species but a number of natural hybrids between *G. vestita* and *G. paniculata*. They formed attractive rounded shrubs to c. 1.5m high, and may well be the 'unnamed species' collected for the area.

Our last day took us north of Perth, where the first stop was past Bindoon where the recently named *G. synapheae* ssp. *latiloba* grows. We had no trouble finding the plants as they grow right by the roadside

and are a massed display of showy cream catkin-like flowers. Not much further on we found another population growing with the extremely rare *G. drummondii*. This is a lovely small shrub less than 1 metre in height with massed small creamy-green flowers that curiously turn bright rose-red as they mature.

On the way back we inspected a population of beautiful prostrate Fuchsia *Grevillea G. bipinnatifida* growing along the road to Chittering Valley. Sadly, spraying, weeds and roadworks had destroyed most of the population. A common story in the West. We headed up into the Darling Range, saddened by the massive weed invasions that had occurred since our last visit. Just out of Toodyay we inspected *G. candolleana*, another extremely rare dwarf *Grevillea*, this one with massed cream spider flowers. Fortunately at present this species is holding on in an area unaffected by man and his weeds!!

It had been a momentous trip, in four short weeks we had uncovered several new species and numerous new subspecies of our favourite genus the *Grevilleas*. We came to realise that every piece of bush in the West has the potential to be something special – there is nowhere else in the world where new species of plants can be discovered growing in small bushland remnants, be they on a roadside or on private property. Take care of your bit of bush, who knows what treasures it may be hiding? If you DO have a plant on your block or growing nearby that you cannot identify, contact your local Community Herbarium. You just might finish up getting a plant named after you!! More importantly though, you may be helping to save yet another rare native plant.

As for Peter and I, we can't get enough of the West and are now preparing for our return trip this spring!

Remember, you can purchase our *Grevillea* Books Vols 1-3.

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