

REDISCOVERY OF *HALORAGIS* *PLATYCARPA*

James Drummond was a tireless and very observant collector of SW WA flora, and he had the great advantage of traveling in areas where European settlement had not yet occurred. His plants were named by the eminent European botanists to whom he sent the specimens. Some of these plants have not been collected again, and there is always great interest when one of them is rediscovered.

A problem with trying to find a Drummond plant is that he was not precise as to locality, often merely recording 'Swan River' for everywhere from Chapman Valley to the Barren Ranges. After all, places didn't have names in his day - well, not English ones, anyway. So finding something a bit unusual could lead to an exciting rediscovery.

This happened to Herbarium botanist Mike Hislop in October 2000, during a survey of a reserve near Dalwallinu in order to install an interpretive trail. He found an unusual *Haloragis*. Now, it has to be admitted that haloragises are pretty boring and unspectacular plants! Low-growing perennials with brown or green flowers, they are the sort of thing most of us step over to get to something more interesting. But botanists on surveys, of course, study everything! And so he collected a piece, and then sent it off to the expert in Canberra. Back came the response - hmm, maybe, but a fruiting collection was required. This was sent in a couple of months later by Joy and Colin Wornes who were co-ordinating the trail project for the Shire. And there it was, *Haloragis platycarpa* - a plant not collected since Drummond sent it to Europe in his first collection in 1842! The plant was growing in jam woodland on brown loamy soil. As with all rare plants, the exact site is confidential.

If you have some jam woodland, why not have a look for haloragises this spring? They all look somewhat alike, but there's a good illustrated key in Blackall & Grieve Part III (see pic below). You may be surprised at the number of native - but not eye-catching - plants you find maybe, even, another population of this one!

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