

A NEW SALT LAKE ENDEMIC WILDFLOWER

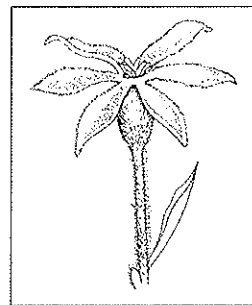
The recent biological survey of the Wheatbelt showed conclusively that the chains of natural salt lakes have their own unique suite of plants and animals. These 'paleodrainages' contain over 750 species of plants, many of which are endemic. A recently-named species is *Tribonanthes minor* *.

The genus *Tribonanthes* is confined to WA, and it has six species, all of which are found in damplands such as lake edges or granite rock swards. They are often quite hairy and have six-petaled flowers, usually white. The plant dies back to a tuber each summer. This one is very tiny, 3-4 cm tall, with a single flower with the petals only 1-1.5 mm long. The most conspicuous feature is probably the purplish bract below the flower.

It occurs on seasonally wet, low sandy rises on the margins of salt lakes and flowers in August-September. So far it is only

known from the vicinity of Lake King and Lake Chinocup. If you have some good quality natural salt lake vegetation near you, why not look for this plant? It would be interesting to find out if it is truly rare, or just overlooked.

* Ref: M. Lyons & G. Keighery. 2006. A new species of *Tribonanthes* (Haemodoraceae) from saline wetland margins in Western Australia. *Nuytsia* **16**: 77-80.



A more usual flower shape for the genus, this is *T. longipetala*.

