In Brief

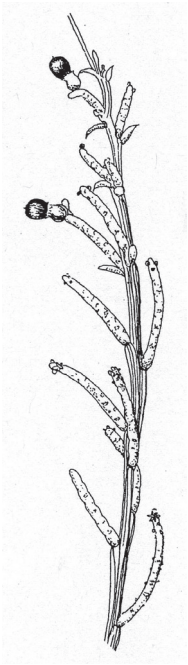
BIRDS LIKE BERRIES

William Davis and Harry Recher have been studying birds in the Great Western Woodlands (GWW) for many years, and in the process have built up a vast knowledge of the natural history of the area. A recent article in *The Western Australian Naturalist* illustrates one such case*.

The native cherry (*Exocarpos aphyllus*) is an important food source for birds in the GWW in late winter and spring. Thirteen species took berries and 12 species foraged for invertebrates on foliage and bark, including five species that took no fruit.

Because of its importance to birds, anyone undertaking revegetation in the Wheatbelt should consider including this species or its close relative, broom ballart (*Exocarpos sparteus*) in their projects.

*[*For ref, contact Ed.]*



The illustration is of Exocarpos sparteus*, drawn by Margaret Pieroni, and is taken from the book Leaf and Branch (reviewed last issue).*

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Seed collection

to be less pronounced for common species with widespread distributions and large continuous populations, those that are predominantly outcrossing (most trees), have long distance seed dispersal (animal dispersed, river dispersed) and pollen dispersal mechanisms (bird pollinated, wind pollinated), perennial species, long-lived species and those of late successional stage including many long-lived woody perennials, shrub and tree species,. For species such as these, 'local' seed collection zones may be expanded however seed collection zones and revegetation sites should not be interrupted by physical barriers that may limit gene flow among populations such as rivers and large areas cleared of native vegetation.

Availability and quality of seed sources

In most revegetation situations, quality of the seed source is more important than sourcing from the nearest local population. Seed should always be collected from large healthy populations that are not suffering from effects of small population size such as poor seed set, or exhibiting poor flowering or excessive predation. Only 20 % of available seed should be collected from a natural population in order to ensure future health of the population.

Seed collected from a range of habitat matched populations with high levels of genetic diversity will almost always be more appropriate material for revegetation than seed collected from a restricted number of 'unhealthy', small or isolated populations on a local geographic scale.

Mellissa Millar is based in DEC's Science Division at Kensington. She can be contacted by email: melissa.millar@dec.wa.gov.au

HUNTSMAN SPIDERS

After the article on wolf spiders last July, a number of readers contacted the Editor to ask if they are the same as huntsman spiders, and if not, is there an easy way to tell the two groups apart? Volker Framenau from the WA Museum provided an answer:

"They are in two different families, wolf spiders are in the family Lycosidae, huntsman spiders in the family Sparassidae. There are three easy ways to tell them apart.

- Look at the eyes. Wolf spiders have four small frontal eyes and four large eyes in almost a square on top of the carapace. Huntsman spiders have two rows of eyes, four and four, almost equal in size.
- Positioning of the legs. Wolf spiders' legs have two pairs pointing more or less forward, two more or less backward, whereas huntsman spiders' legs stretch out sideways and they tend to scuttle sideways like a crab.
- Broodcare. Wolf spiders carry their egg sac around with them, but huntsmen spiders make a silken brood chamber in which they deposit their egg sac. They will remain beside this chamber to guard it.

Hope this helps, folks!"

Thank you, Volker.