

Plant of the Month – September 2012

Pityrodia augustensis – Mt. Augustus Foxglove



Endemic to the Mount Augustus area, *Pityrodia augustensis* is a bushy shrub to 1 m high with purple-red flowers appearing in August to September.

Superficially similar in terms of inflorescence and flowers to the related *Pityrodia axillaris* and *P. terminalis*, this priority flora species is readily distinguished from them by its narrowly elliptic leaves which are cuneate (wedge-shaped) towards both ends. Unlike several other species in the genus, the anthers on the upper pair of stamens are longer than the lower pair, however, the filaments of the lower pair are longer than the upper pair, which is in common with the rest of the species.

Additionally, the two related species occur in the southwest of the State, while *Pityrodia augustensis* is restricted to a small area within the Gascoyne IBRA Region of Beard's Eremaean province, where it was first collected by Ernie Wittwer in 1971. It was subsequently described by Ahmad Abid Munir in his taxonomic revision of the genus in 1979.

Pityrodia augustensis is one of the Australian native foxgloves, belonging to the large botanical family **Lamiaceae** — the mint family. The generic name derives from the Greek *pityron* meaning bran, husk or scale-like, which refers to the leaves, while the species epithet contains the Latin adjectival suffix *-ensis* indicating place of origin.

Photo: Sue Patrick

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