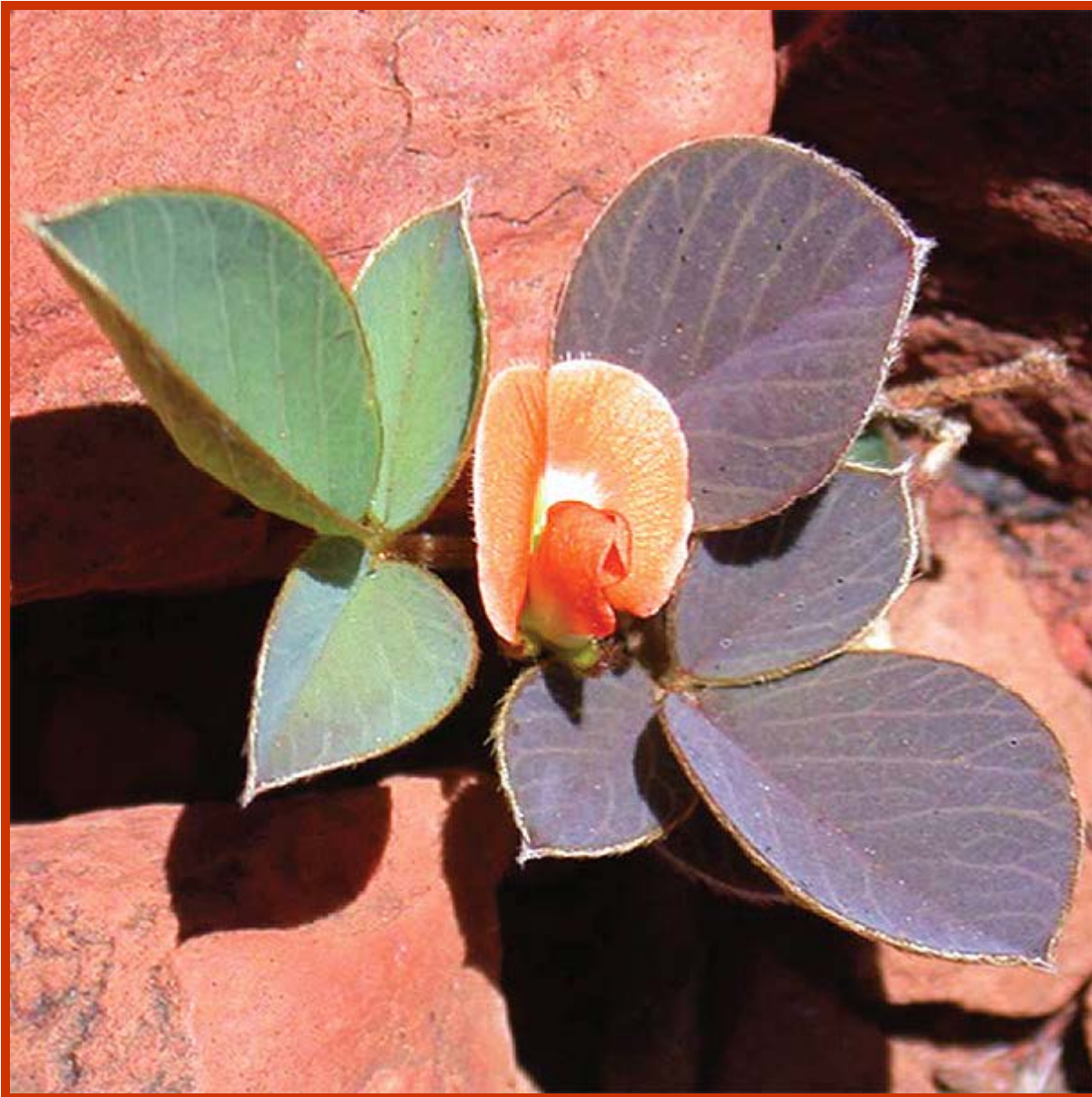


Plant of the Month – January 2013

Tephrosia oxalidea



Tephrosia oxalidea is a woody, perennial herb to 25 cm tall with usually trifoliolate, discoloured leaves and short

inflorescences bearing 1-3(-5) orange flowers with a cream-yellow eye at the throat. It can be distinguished from all other Western Australian species of *Tephrosia* by the following combination of characters: plants small and tufted; leaves usually trifoliolate and discoloured with the upper leaflet surface usually green-purple to purple-brown and commonly glabrous; leaf stipules are long and persistent; the flowers are orange and the fruit usually linear with patent hairs and bearing compressed-subglobose, red-brown, rugulose seeds.

Flowering and fruiting in *Tephrosia oxalidea* has so far been recorded between March and September, although may be continuous throughout the year in response to local rainfall events. This

species has mostly been collected from the Hamersley, Packsaddle and Ophthalmia Ranges in the Pilbara bioregion, with additional collections from the Barlee Range on the north-western edge of the Gascoyne bioregion. This taxon does not require a conservation listing as, although it is found on some mining tenements, it also occurs in a number of DEC conservation reserves in the two bioregions, and has an area of occupancy of c. 400 km².

Tephrosia is derived from the Greek — *tephros* 'ash-coloured' and the epithet *oxalidea* acknowledges the superficial resemblance of this species to some members of the genus *Oxalis*. *Tephrosia oxalidea* was recently described in our journal *Nuytsia* by Ryonen Butcher and Johan Hurter, from which much of this text is transcribed. The paper also includes a number of detailed colour plates, as well as a comparison of seed morphology in allied WA taxa.

Tephrosia oxalidea R.Butcher & P.J.H.Hurter was previously known under the phrase-name *Tephrosia* sp. Cathedral Gorge (F.H. Mollemans 2420).

Photo: K. McCreery

Find out more about *Tephrosia oxalidea*

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