

Plant of the Month – February 2013

Poranthera moorokatta



Poranthera moorokatta is a new species recently discovered in Banksia woodland in Kings Park, in the heart of the Perth metropolitan area. The new species is

morphologically allied to *P. triandra*, a woodland species distributed from Lake King in Western Australia to the Grampians in Victoria, and perhaps also to *P. dissecta*, a species from granite outcrops in south-east Western Australia. The discovery was made while photographing other annual herbs when attention was drawn to plants of a small *Poranthera* with red-green petioles and fruit, in contrast to the taller, green plants of *P. microphylla*, which were also present.

Study of specimens at the Western Australian Herbarium showed that there was only one previous collection of this taxon, from Banksia woodland at Ellenbrook. Discovery of a new species in an area of well-documented urban bushland came as a significant surprise. Currently known from only these

two locations, questions remain as to whether this species is more widespread and simply overlooked due to its small stature, or whether it is truly rare and locally restricted in distribution.

Flowers and fruit have been recorded for late September to early November. Listed currently as Priority Two under the DEC's Conservation Codes for Western Australian Flora, as *Poranthera* sp. Kings Park (R.L.Barrett 2958), it is considered that the species requires urgent assessment to determine if its conservation status should be upgraded to Threatened.

The species epithet is from the local Noongar name for Mt Eliza, Kings Park — *Mooro Katta* meaning 'home hill'. *Poranthera moorokatta* was recently described in our journal *Nuytsia* by Russell Barrett, 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.

Photo: R.L.Barrett

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[<< Previous](#) [Next >>](#)



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