

Plant of the Month – September 2013

Astartea granitica



Astartea granitica, the Granite Astartea, is a newly described species in the family Myrtaceae. First collected in 1994 by Tony Annel, it can be

distinguished from other species in the genus by the following combination of characters: a single-stemmed shrub with flowers 10-13 mm in diameter, the outer sepals prominently horned with white or pale pink petals 4-5 mm long and having 28-40 stamens (staminodes usually absent) and a 3-locular ovary.

A. granitica is named for its habitat, as it occurs on at least eight granite outcrops in an area with 1,000 - 1,300 mm annual rainfall extending from near Weld River east to near Frankland River. It is restricted to the middle-level and upper soil pockets of the outcrops where it is dominant and forms dense stands. Other taxa commonly associated with granite, such as *Verticordia plumosa*, occur

nearby but tend to be excluded from the soil pockets where *A. granitica* is best established. It is a geographically restricted species that lacks a lignotuber and is susceptible to dieback caused by *Phytophthora*

A. granitica was previously known under the phrase-name '*Astartea* sp. Mt Johnston (A.R. Annels 5645)'. It has recently been described by Barbara Rye and Malcolm Trudgen in our journal *Nuytsia*, from which much of this text is transcribed. This revision of the genus *Astartea* includes a complete key to all taxa, a number of detailed colour plates, botanical illustrations and distribution maps.

Photo: P.J. Rye

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[<< Previous](#)

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