

Plant of the Month – October 2013

Verticordia plumosa – Plumed Featherflower



Verticordia plumosa has four common varieties — var. *brachyphylla*, var. *grandiflora*, var. *incrassata* and var. *plumosa* — with fairly large distributions in the south-west. Although all four show considerable morphological variation across their ranges, they can usually be distinguished fairly readily from one another on

morphological grounds as well as differing in their areas of occurrence and habitat preferences. Two others, var. *ananeotes* and var. *vassensis*, are restricted to a strip along the west coast between Perth and Augusta and both varieties are recognised as threatened in WA.

Most significantly however, is that the greater range of variation now known for the characters previously considered to separate *V. plumosa* var. *pleiobotrya* from var. *brachyphylla* means that there is a considerable overlap in each of them. As there are now no reliable characters available to distinguish the two varieties, the decision has been made to reduce var. *pleiobotrya* to a synonym of var. *brachyphylla*.

Verticordia plumosa was recently revised by Anne Harris and Barbara Rye in our journal *Nuytsia*, from which much of this text is transcribed. This revision includes a complete key to all six varieties, a table comparing morphology of var. *pleiobotrya* from var. *brachyphylla* and updated distribution maps.

Photo: K.R. Thiele

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