

## Plant of the Month – December 2013

### *Stylidium nymphaeum*



*Stylidium nymphaeum* is a particularly striking species in view of its height and beautifully ornate flowers. The only other triggerplant that can grow to more than 2 m high is the equally spectacular *S. laciniatum*, a species that, in contrast to *S. nymphaeum*, possesses twining scapes and is often leafless when mature. Interestingly,

these two species have a similar geographic distribution and both prefer winter-wet habitats but have never been observed growing in sympatry.

*S. nymphaeum* exhibits a climbing habit to over 2 m high, elongated stems with leaves in discrete whorls and pale mauve or medium pink-mauve corolla lobes with erose (irregularly toothed) margins. It is morphologically allied to *Stylidium scandens* but differs most obviously in having a taller habit. It was illustrated (as *S. scandens*) by Ferdinand Bauer from his own collection made on the Flinder's expedition of 1801-5; the drawing is now housed at the Natural History Museum London and is, according to the current author, arguably the most exquisite of any *Stylidium* illustration.

Flowering specimens of *S. nymphaeum* have been collected from October through to July, with peak flowering from late December to March. The species is restricted to the Warren and southern Jarrah Forest regions, extending from near Albany to south of Dunsborough. It grows in seasonally inundated swamps and flats, creeklines and waterlogged hill slopes. As it is locally common and well represented within the conservation estate the species is considered to be at risk. The species epithet is derived from the greek *nymphae* — demi-goddesses who inhabit the sea, rivers, fountains, hill, woods or trees, in reference to this species habitat preference.

*Stylidium nymphaeum* was recently described by Juliet Wege [in our journal Nuytsia](#), from which much of this text is transcribed. This paper includes a detailed taxonomic description, discussion of affinities and taxonomic history, a number of photographs, and a plate reproducing Ferdinand Bauer's illustration of *Stylidium nymphaeum*.

Photo: J.A. Wege

[Find out more about \*Stylidium nymphaeum\*](#)

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