

Plant of the Month — February 2021

Pilostyles hamiltoniorum C.A.Gardner



Pilostyles hamiltoniorum is a completely parasitic plant that lacks chlorophyll and therefore does not photosynthesise. It grows within the stems of its host, and only appears during flowering, when the flowers burst through the surface of the host's bark a bit like the creature in the movie *Alien*.

Pilostyles is a genus of c. 18 species occurring in North and South America, the Middle East and south-western Australia. All species of *Pilostyles* grow only on genera within the family Fabaceae; the Western Australian species grow on *Daviesia*, *Jacksonia* or *Gastrolobium*. Flowers of *P. hamiltoniorum* appear on second year's growth of *Daviesia angulata*, *D. nudiflora* and *D. rhombifolia*, from late January to March. Very little is known of the biology of *Pilostyles hamiltoniorum*, including how it infects its hosts, how its seeds are dispersed, and how it survives when its hosts are burnt by fires.

Photo: K. Thiele

[Find out more about *Pilostyles hamiltoniorum* C.A.Gardner](#)

- [Previous](#)
- [Calendar](#)
- [Next](#)

Are you sure you want to delete this Plant of the Month entry?



- [Contact us](#)
- [Copyright](#)
- [About](#)

FloraBase is produced by the staff of the [Western Australian Herbarium](#), Biodiversity and Conservation Science, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. Publication or other use of content on this site is unauthorised unless that use conforms with the copyright statement.

Cite FloraBase

Western Australian Herbarium (1998–). FloraBase—the Western Australian Flora. Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. <https://florabase.dpaw.wa.gov.au/>