

## LOVE-BIRDS.

(By Joyce Carter, Std IX.)

A charming robin red-breast,  
 Who lived a lonely life,  
 Thought he would ask some birdie  
 To be his loving wife.  
 And so he whistled merrily  
 His bright, enchanting song,  
 So that all birds would hear him,  
 And then would come along.

The birds that heard his love song,  
 To him then straightway flew;  
 With loving chirps, each pleaded  
 To be his sweetheart true.  
 But far back in the branches,  
 So quiet and so shy,  
 Sat one, who looked so sweetly  
 With love-lit, pleading eye.

And when at last he spied her,  
 He flew straight to her side:  
 "My shy, and pretty love-bird,  
 Pray be my charming bride;  
 Your dress is quite becoming,  
 You look so very neat,  
 Please won't you be my love bird,  
 My pretty bird, so sweet!"

'Twas just a nod she gave him,  
 This shy but loving bird.  
 For though she did not answer,  
 He knew "yes" was the word.  
 So then they flew so swiftly  
 Together, side by side,  
 To where a nest was waiting  
 To welcome his dear bride.

And so they lived together,  
 When on one fine spring day,  
 Three little chirping birdies  
 Came to that nest to stay.  
 And so these happy love birds  
 No longer were quite free,  
 For they had then to care for  
 A chirping family.

## WESTERN AUSTRALIAN WILDFLOWERS.

## No. XXXV. The Streaked Darwinia.

*Darwinia macrostegia* (Turez.) Benth.

(By C. A. GARDNER, Government Botanist.)

The subject chosen for illustration this month is an exceedingly handsome plant from the Stirling Range, which is seen only on a few of the peaks towards the centre of the Range. Its large bell-shaped "flowers" have earned for it the common name of "Mountain Bell," but there are so many bell-shaped flowers amongst our immense flora, and the resemblance is so close to another "bell" (*Pimelea*), that I think we ought to give the plant its generic name, especially since it is a familiar name, commemorating as it does the famous naturalist Charles Darwin, who visited the district in which it grows when the "Beagle" anchored in King George Sound.

Many of you, especially those who live in the wheat areas, will imagine that this type of flower is familiar to you, because you will think it is the "Banjine,"

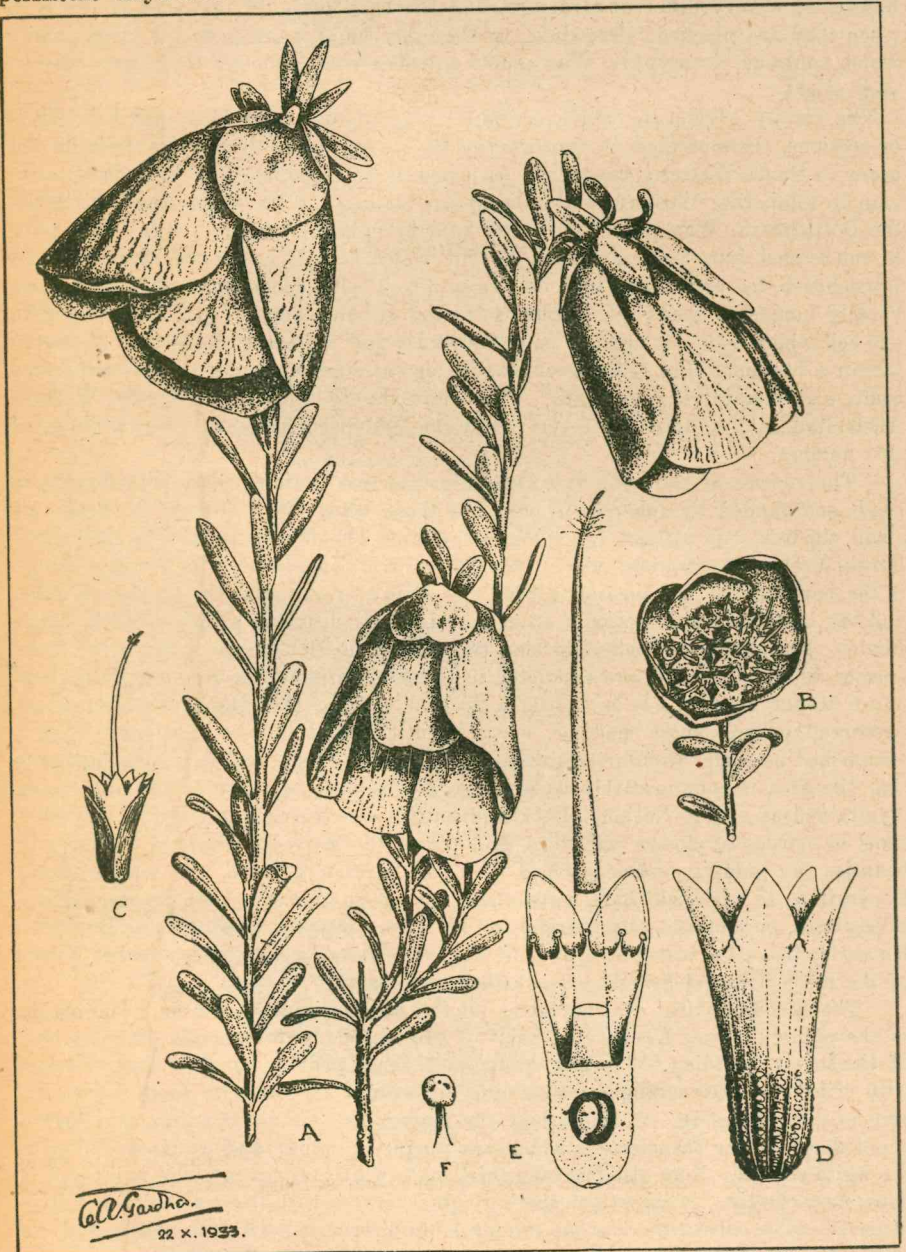
(*Pimelea*). The two are somewhat similar in that both genera have "flowers" consisting of large coloured bracts, while the true flowers are the smaller structures hidden and protected by these petal-like bracts. *Pimelea*, however, has long tubular flowers of a very different structure, and the bark peels off one side of the stem when they are plucked. *Darwinia*, on the other hand, belongs to the large family which contains *Eucalyptus*, Wax plant, and Tea tree, although the resemblance is very slight.

The family *Myrtaceæ*, which contains these plants, is divided into two tribes or sections. One of them is characterized by its berry-like fruits, but these do not occur in South-Western Australia. An example is *Eugenia*. The other tribe, common to temperate Western Australia, and containing all the Gum trees, Tea trees, the Bottlebrush, Wax plant and a host of other plants, has dry fruits. This tribe is subdivided into two sub-tribes, one of which, *e.g.*, *Eucalyptus*, Tea tree and Bottlebrush, has ovaries divided into from 3 to 5 cells, which open to liberate their usually numerous seeds. The other sub-tribe (*Chamælaucieæ*) has an ovary with one cell which does not open to emit the seeds; and the seeds, being thus protected within a hardened and fruiting calyx-tube or false fruit, do not possess hard seed coats, *e.g.*, Geraldton Wax plant. This sub-tribe is almost exclusively Western Australian, and contains some very handsome and peculiar plants. *Darwinia* is of this number.

The species of *Darwinia* fall naturally into two sections, those with flowers in heads surrounded by coloured bracts, and those which have flowers in heads or small clusters, but without the coloured bracts. The former section is exclusively South-Western Australian, and is only found in a few spots. The Stirling Range is the home of the five largest species, the prince of which is the species figured; and the others come principally from the Midlands districts, growing on the sand-plains. The five large-bracted species, the "Mountain Bells," are amongst the finest species of our flora, and are restricted to the mountains of the Stirling Range and West Mount Barren. It is indeed a fortunate thing that these fine species are preserved in our most natural, most beautiful and largest National Park—established as such through the foresight of Lord Forrest—and it is also fortunate that the area is comparatively isolated, since this isolation ensures the area being maintained as a true National Park and native reserve unspoiled by the depredations of hordes of flower collectors, and those who strive to improve our natural beauties by adding species which do not harmonize with the native flora. Generations to come will have a priceless heritage in this area with its rugged and precipitous mountains, its stretches of Blue Smoke Bush, Red Banksias, Rhododendron-like Isopogons, and all the other floral wealth which makes it one of the most richly endowed spots of the whole earth.

The accompanying drawing gives all the details required for an examination of the plant. Figure A shows its habit of growth, but unfortunately gives no idea of the lovely blending of white, pink and lemon-yellow, streaked and blotched with crimson. The arrangement of the individual flowers with their five petals can be seen in fig. B. C shows how the flowers are contained within two keeled small floral leaves (bracteoles) which are purple in colour and contrast well with the white corolla. Note also the long thick style which tapers to a fine point and is hairy near the tip. D shows you the individual flowers with the bracteoles and style removed. The calyx-tube has five minute lobes alternating with the petals, and the lower portion of the tube is finely warted with resinous glands. In fig. E you see the structure of the flower. The ten small stamens alternate with five very small tooth-like sterile stamens or staminodia. The anthers open in two minute pores, and are thus unlike the normal anthers of flowering plants. The calyx-tube is deep, the bottom being almost fully occupied by the thick base of the white style; and the solitary cell of the ovary contains two ovules, of which number only one

normally develops into a seed—a seed which when fully developed is waxy and white with the texture of an ovule, and is never liberated, but germinates within the persistent calyx-tube.



Streaked Darwinia (*Darwinia macrostegia*, (Turcz.) Benth.).

A, habit of plant, about natural size. B, interior of involucre (slightly reduced). C, flower enveloped by two bracteoles (slightly enlarged). D, flower with the style removed (enlarged). E, oblique section of flower showing section of ovary, five stamens, and four staminodes. The style is shown in proportion, but rendered transparent to show the stamens. F, stamen (much enlarged).

Ross Peak, Stirling Range.

Icon. origin.