

Plant of the Month - January

by Allan Carr

Hibbertia scandens

Twining Guinea Flower

Pronunciation: he-BERT-ee-a SCAN-dens

DILLENACEAE

Derivation: *Hibbertia*, after George Hibbert, 1757-1837 English merchant, politician, slave owner, ship owner and botany patron; *scandens*, from the Latin, *scandere* – to climb.



Flower



Fruit showing bright orange arils

Hibbertia is a large genus of more than 150 species, the majority of them being endemic in Australia, particularly in WA where about 68 species are found. Most species are found among the low shrubs of heathlands and sandplain vegetation and a significant proportion also grow in open forest and woodland. Overseas they are also found in New Guinea, New Caledonia, Fiji and Madagascar.

Description: *H. scandens* is a vigorous trailing or climbing vine with stems to 4 metres. These plants are found on the coast and ranges from central Queensland to south-eastern New South Wales. *H. scandens* was named the ‘Guinea Flower’ by early settlers, as its colour was likened to the golden guinea coin that was used at that time.

Leaves are alternate and elliptical in shape to about 80 mm by 30 mm. The upper surface is glossy and deep green in colour, while the lower surface is finely hairy. Plants near the sea tend to have leaves rounded at the *apex as in the photos above while inland plants tend to have leaves with a tapering apex.

Flowers, large and golden yellow, 50 to 70 mm across, occur throughout the year but are most commonly seen from August to January. The individual flowers with five petals usually last only a day or two but new flowers are produced over a long period.

Fruits are capsules to 12 mm, opening to reveal bright orange *arils around brownish seeds.

*apex = the tip (opposite end from the stem)

*aril = a fleshy outgrowth of the stalk of a seed, often succulent and/ or brightly coloured and bird or insect attracting



Habit