

Plant of the Month - February

by Allan Carr

Dampiera stricta

Wallum *Dampiera*
GOODENIACEAE

Pronunciation: damp-ee-AIR-a STRICT-a

Derivation: *Dampiera*, after William Dampier, English navigator and explorer who collected plant specimens on his second voyage to the coast of WA in 1699; *stricta*, from the Latin, *strictus* – tight or straight, and in this instance, upright.

Will Dampier collected some 17 plants, including Sturt's Desert Pea. These were the first Australian plants to reach European herbaria and about a dozen are still preserved in the Oxford herbarium.



Habit



Leaves, flowers

Dampiera is an endemic genus of around 60 to 70 species, with the greatest representation in south-west Western Australia. *Dampiera* species have ridges leading to the throat of the flower. These are thought to act as guides to potential pollinators.

Description: *D. stricta* is a suckering herb with a few stems to 60 cm. Also, variously described in different publications as a spreading groundcover, suckering shrub with sparse foliage, suckering perennial herb and dwarf, erect multi-stemmed perennial subshrub. Stems are angular with three acute angles. New growth is finely hairy. It is widespread on the coast and ranges from Rockhampton in Queensland through New South Wales and Victoria to Tasmania. A similar species, *D. sylvestris* has been confused with *D. stricta*.

Leaves are alternate, *sessile and usually dentate with a few coarse teeth which can be seen clearly in the photo on the right below. They can be up to 35 mm x 25 mm and are often bunched towards the top of the stem.

Flowers to 25 mm across are five-lobed and light blue through to purple with a pale yellow to white throat. There are rusty hairs on the outside of the *corolla. Flowering usually occurs from August to March.

Fruits 4 to 5 mm long are ribbed and covered with short rusty hairs.

*sessile = without a stalk

*corolla = that part of a flower made up of the petals



Dentate leaves