

Plant of the Month - June

by Allan Carr

Westringia eremicola

Pronunciation: west-RIN-gee-a air-ee-my-COAL-a

Derivation: *Westringia*, after Johan Peter Westring, eighteenth century Swedish writer on lichens; *eremicola*, from the Greek, *eremos* – desert, *colo* – to inhabit.

Slender Westringia
LAMIACEAE



Habit



Leaves, flower



Westringia calyx



Prostanthera calyx

In Australia there are about 25 endemic species of *Westringia* with the greatest representation in the eastern states. The genus is closely allied to *Prostanthera* but can be readily distinguished by the fragrance and the *calyx. *Westringias* are not aromatic like the *Prostantheras* and *Westringia* calyces have five lobes, whereas *Prostantheras* have two.

Description: *W. eremicola* is a small, somewhat open shrub, usually reaching around 1.5 m x 1 m with branchlets usually covered with short hairs. As the species derivation suggests, it tends to be found in sunny positions on stony soils distributed in inland and coastal regions from Bundaberg, Qld through NSW and Vic to SA.

Leaves, to 20 mm x 2 mm are in *whorls of three, grey-green and hairy with *recurved margins and a pointed apex.

Flowers are about 10 mm across and mauve or purple with orange to brown spots. In these the *corolla is tubular with five lobes (petals), the upper two forming one lip and the lower three forming another. They occur mainly from September to February, sometimes March to May.

Fruits are divided into four segments.

*calyx = that part of a flower made up of the sepals (usually green, but dark red here →)

*whorl = a ring of leaves all at the same level

*recurved = rolled under

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



Flower and hairy leaves