

## Plant of the Month - July

by Allan Carr

### *Hibbertia vestita*

### Hairy Guinea Flower

DILLENIACEAE

**Pronunciation:** hib-ER-sha ves-TEET-a

**Derivation:** *Hibbertia*, after George Hibbert, 1757-1837 English merchant, politician, slave owner, ship owner and botany patron; *vestita*, from the Latin, *vestire* – to clothe, (a reference to the hairy leaves and branchlets).



Flower



Hairy leaves



Flower plus native bee

*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. vestita* is a shrub to 30 cm with erect, sprawling or prostrate branchlets and stems usually minutely hairy. This species is very prominent in coastal heath as a sprawling prostrate plant but is also found as a low erect shrub in forested habitats further inland and is fire tolerant sprouting again after such an event. It occurs from about Rockhampton in Qld south to Wyong in NSW.

**Leaves** to 7 mm by 2 mm are linear, alternate and minutely hairy with \*recurved edges and a blunt end. They are dark green above and paler below.

**Flowers** to 25 mm across are yellow with 5 bi-lobed petals (photo on left above). At any time of the year but mostly from June to November these are borne in small clusters on the ends of the branchlets. Petals are flimsy, sepals are silky hairy and each flower has about 30 stamens (photos on left and right above).

**Fruits** with three segments are \*dehiscent at the apex revealing three black seeds partly covered with fleshy \*arils.

A host plant of the Satin-green Forester day-flying moth (*Pollanisia viridipulverulenta*) which feeds on the flowers.

\*dehiscent = breaking open at maturity to release the contents

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

\*recurved = rolled under



Habit