

## Plant of the Month - August

by Allan Carr

### *Aotus lanigera*

**Woolly Aotus**

**Pronunciation:** ay-OH-tus lan-IDG-er-a

FABACEAE

**Derivation:** *Aotus*, from the Greek, *a* – without and *ous*, *otus* – ear (\*bracteoles are lacking); *lanigera*, from the Latin, *lana* – wool and *gerus* – bearing (bearing wool).



Leaves, flowers



Habit

*Aotus* is an endemic genus of about 15 species mainly confined to south-west WA but also occurring in south Qld, eastern NSW, Vic, Tas and temperate SA.

**Description:** *A. lanigera* is a small shrub to about 1.5 m, densely branched close to the ground with stems covered in long, soft usually dark hairs. It grows in scrub or heath on sandy soils in the Wallum of south-east Qld and northern NSW, and near Stanthorpe in Girraween National Park. The roots have nitrogen fixing nodules like other legumes. First collected by Alan Cunningham from Maroochy in 1874.

**Leaves** are small and narrow to 20 mm x 4 mm, dark green, \*lanceolate and upright, roughly parallel to the stem. They are alternate, whorled or spirally arranged and \*discolorous. Their \*revolute leaf margins can be seen in the photo on left above.

**Flowers** are a typical pea-shape and bright yellow to 12 mm across with petals that are more or less pointed. Red markings as in some of the other yellow pea flowers are rare. In July to October spectacular mass flowerings can occur in some locations.

**Fruits** are pods up to 10 mm long and \*villous, giving a woolly appearance.

\*bracteole = A leaf-like bud-protecting structure at the base of a flower (a special bract)

\*lanceolate = shaped like a lance head, tapering at each end but usually broader in the lower half

\*discolorous = both surfaces having a different colour

\*revolute = when leaf margins are rolled back under

\*villous = covered in long weak hairs

Woolly seed pods

