

Plant of the Month - September

by Allan Carr

Boronia falcifolia

Pronunciation: bor-OWN-ee-a fal-see-FOAL-ee-a

Derivation: *Boronia*, after Francesco Borone, a young Italian assistant of English botanist, John Sibthorp, author of 'Flora Graeca' in the late 1700s. Borone died from a fall at the age of 25 and had no known connections with Australia. It was J E Smith who named the genus *Boronia* in 1798. *falcifolia*, from the Latin, *falcis*, a sickle and *folium*, a leaf, (a reference to curved leaflets - more obvious in the bottom right photo).

Wallum Boronia
RUTACEAE



Habit



Flower, terete leaves



Habitat

Boronia is a genus of about 95 species throughout Australia, with one greatly different species in New Caledonia. Of these 45 are endemic in WA.

Description: *B. falcifolia* is a twiggy shrub to 75 cm with slender red-brown stems and very few lateral branches. It occurs in damp, sandy, wallum heathland from about Maryborough in Qld south to Coffs Harbour in NSW.

Leaves are opposite, aromatic and usually *trifoliolate, each leaflet to 20 mm by 2 mm being flattish to *terete, slightly *falcate and fleshy with a fine point. They are usually crowded along the stems and pointing upwards.

Flowers to 15 mm across are deep rose pink with 4 petals and a wax-like appearance. At any time of the year but mostly from June to November these are borne in small clusters in the upper leaf *axils on the branches.

Fruits are distinctly lobed and become separate at maturity with each compressed oblong lobe to 4 mm having one seed.

Known food plant of the Ground Parrot (*Pezaporus wallicus*).

On Bribie Island in the first half of the twentieth century, armfuls of cut flowers were sold to weekend visitors as they left the island to return to Brisbane on the steam vessels, Koopa and Doomba.

*trifoliolate = having three *folioles

*foliole = leaflet

*terete = cylindrical, circular in cross-section

*falcate = sickle-shaped

*axil = angle formed between a leaf and its stem



Flowers and reddish stems