

## Plant of the Month - October

by Allan Carr

### *Drosera spatulata*

### Spoon-leaved Sundew

**Pronunciation:** DROSS-er-a spat-ewe-LAH-ta

DROSERACEAE

**Derivation:** *Drosera*: from the Greek *droseros* (dewy) – refers to the droplets on the glandular hairs; *spatulata*: from the Latin *spatulate* (shaped like a spatula) – refers to the spoon-shaped leaves.



Habit with numerous flower stalks

Leaves forming a rosette

*Drosera* is a large genus of about 100 species distributed in temperate and tropical parts of the world. They are well developed in Australia with about 54 named species and many more waiting to be described. Forty-two species are known from the south-west of WA and the rest occur in the eastern states and tropical areas. They are carnivorous and trap small insects with glandular hairs mostly on the upper surface of the leaves. Enzymes break down the insect's protein and the resulting solution is absorbed by the leaf. This aids the plant's nutrition but is not essential. However, the extra nutrition may be significant in flower and seed production.

**Description:** *Drosera spatulata* belongs to a group of rosetted sundews, small perennial herbs with a basal rosette of leaves. This sundew has a wide distribution across Asia, Australia and New Zealand in moist, sandy locations - seepage sites, stream banks and wetland areas.

**Leaves** in a basal rosette to 40 mm in diameter are spoon-shaped with glandular hairs that are pressure sensitive. These hairs move inwards and downwards when touched, trapping tiny creatures. Leaf colour may vary from a light creamy, green to a deep red.

**Flowers** up to 6 mm across are usually borne from August to May on stems to 200 mm and can be pink or white.

**Fruits** are small black capsules with many tiny seeds.

Carnivorous plant growers consider *D. spatulata* to be a weed because it is very hardy and produces copious amounts of seed after flowering. The seed also germinates readily, causing plants to pop up in surrounding pots.



Flower