

## Plant of the Month - October

by Allan Carr

### *Sphaerolobium vimineum*

leafless globe pea

**Pronunciation:** sfear-o-LO-be-um vim-in-EE-um

FABACEAE

**Derivation:** *Sphaerolobium*, from the Greek, *sphaira* – a sphere or ball and *lobos* – a pod or capsule. *vimineum*, from the Latin, *vimineus* – bearing long willow-like shoots.



Flowers



Fruits



Habitat in wet wallum

*Sphaerolobium* is an endemic genus of about 20 species of which this is one of two representatives in south-east Qld. Their highest concentration is in south-west WA, where most species are found.

**Description:** *S. vimineum* is a wiry shrub to 70 cm high with cylindrical green stems faintly ribbed. It is widely distributed from south-east Qld through coastal and near coastal NSW into Vic and in south-west WA on moisture retentive acid soils. The plants are mainly erect and rush-like with a woody rootstock, inconspicuous until flowering. Ludwig Leichhardt, naturalist and explorer, collected this plant at Toorbul on 25 September 1843.

**Leaves** are few and tiny (less than 5 mm long) or not present at all.

**Flowers** to 5 mm across are pea-shaped (see Plant of the Month June, 2015 for diagram) with usually a series of 2 or 3 clustered together on long, terminal, unbranched stems about 120 mm long. Yellow flowers with red markings are borne during July to September. Bracts are green with black spots.



**Fruits** are spherical inflated pods to 5 mm diameter on stalks with small round seeds to 2.5 mm across.

\*bract = leaf-like part at the base of a flower



Flowers and seed pods