

Plant of the Month - May

by Allan Carr

Gompholobium pinnatum

poor man's gold

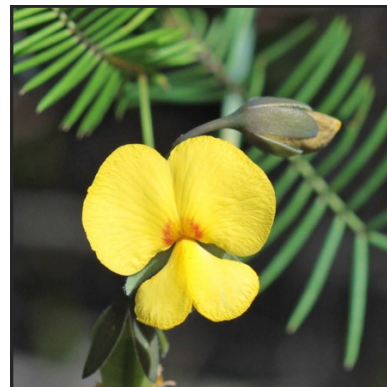
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Pronunciation: gom-fo-LO-be-um PIN-ar-tum

Derivation: *Gompholobium*, from the Greek, *gomphos* – peg, tooth, *lobos* – pod (referring to the tooth-like nature of the fruit attachment); *pinnatum*, from the Latin, *pinnatus* – feathered (referring to the feather-like shape of the compound leaves).



Habit



Flower, bud, leaves

Gompholobium is a genus comprising about 40 species, all except one endemic in Australia. The exception occurs in New Guinea. Many of them (28) are found in south-western WA. Flower colour in the genus includes blue, mauve, orange, red and yellow.

Description: *G. pinnatum* is a delicate small shrub to 30 cm with thin, flexible stems, often hidden amongst grasses in sandy coastal areas and some mountain heathland such as that at Mt Mee. It is found from Cooktown and the Atherton Tableland in north Qld, down the coast to Ulladulla in NSW.

Leaves are alternate, compound and feather-like with 9 or more opposite or nearly opposite pairs of leaflets to 12 mm x 1 mm, and including one terminal leaflet.

Flowers are pea-shaped (Plant of the Month, August 2014 and June 2015 each have an illustration showing the petal configuration), yellow, usually with red central markings, in terminal clusters from November to February and sporadically though the year.

Fruits are brown to black pods to 12 mm across that pop audibly when mature with about 8 seeds inside.

A couple of other *Gompholobium* species found in south-east Queensland are illustrated below. Each of these has larger yellow flowers from about July to November, trifoliolate leaves (three leaflets) and similar seed pods.



G. latifolium



G. virgatum



G. pinnatum fruits