

Plant of the Month - August

by Allan Carr

Conospermum taxifolium

Pronunciation: cono-SPER-mum tax-if-OLE-ee-um

devil's rice
PROTEACEAE

Derivation: *Conospermum*, from the Greek, *konos* - a cone, *sperma* - a seed; *taxifolium*, from the Latin, *taxus* - yew tree and *folium* - a leaf (referring to leaves similar to those of the genus, *Taxus* - yew trees).



Softly hairy, tubular white flowers

Conospermum, is an Australian *endemic genus of about 50 species, most of which occur in south-west WA where they are known as smoke bushes as these flowering shrubs give the appearance of wisps of smoke from a distance. *C. taxifolium* occurs from south of Rockhampton, Qld, through coastal NSW and into Vic.

Description: *C. taxifolium* is an upright twiggy shrub to 1.5 m in sandy heathland. It often has a single vertical stem.

Leaves to 30 mm x 3 mm are alternate, dark green, covered in soft white hairs and usually slightly twisted.

Flowers to 7 mm long are tubular, white and borne in clusters at the top of the stem from August to November. They are 2-lipped and covered in soft hairs with 3 lobes on lower lip, hence the common name.

Fruits are cone-shaped hairy nuts to 3 mm long with a fringe of hairs to 2.5 mm long from the base.

*endemic = with a natural distribution confined to a specific geographical region



Habit, leaves



Flowers with beetle



Fruits