

Plant of the Month - July 2021

by Allan Carr

Ricinocarpus pinifolius

wedding bush

Pronunciation: ris-in-oh-CARP-os pin-if-OLE-ee-us

EUPHORBIACEAE

Derivation: *Ricinocarpus*, from the Latin, *ricinus* – a tick and the Greek, *karpos* – fruit (the fruits are covered with short growths that seeming look like ticks); *pinifolius*, from the Latin, *pinus* – the pine and *folium* – a leaf (the leaves being similar to pine needles).



Male flowers (5 and 6 petals)

Female flowers (5 petals)

Fruits, male flowers

There are 15 *Ricinocarpus* species in Australia, 10 of which are found in in south-west WA and one species in New Caledonia.

Description: This *monoecious shrub or small tree to 3 m with *glabrous new growth is found in coastal areas from south-east Qld through eastern NSW and southern Vic to Tas. Plant of the month not because it is easy to grow but because it has just begun flowering on Bribie Island and has interesting male and female flowers. *R. pinifolius* is highly decorative and eye-catching when in flower. It was named in 1817 by French botanist, René Louiche Desfontaines, after being collected near Port Jackson, NSW by botanists on Nicolas Baudin's 1800-03 expedition in the *Géographe* and *Naturaliste*.

Leaves to 30 mm x 3 mm are simple, linear and alternate, dull dark green above and paler below with *recurved margins.

Flowers in terminal clusters of individual flowers to 25 mm in diameter are bright white, each with 5 to 7 petals and yellow centres which identify male or female flowers. There are usually 3 to 6 male flowers clustered around each female flower.

Fruits are globular capsules to 12 mm across, densely *muricate with soft, short spines, pale green at first but changing to brown-black as they mature. They burst into 3 parts exposing 5 mm long mottled brown seeds, with a white knob at one end.

*monoecious = having separate male and female reproductive structures in separate flowers on the same plant

*glabrous = without hairs or scales

*recurved = rolled under

*muricate = rough on the surface with short outgrowths

Habit on Bribie Island

