

'As published in Native Plants'

Hibbertia bangorbypassii

In serendipitous circumstances the Menai Wildflower Group may have played a part in the discovery of a new species of hibbertia.

In 2003 before the bulldozers were let loose to begin work on the Bangor Bypass we sort permission from the RTA to remove some of the plants destined for destruction and were pleasantly surprised at the cooperation we received. The RTA took the time to put several of our members through an induction programme and provide us with helmets and jackets to conform to safety regulations.

We removed a number of plants desired by our members such as ground orchids as well as the endangered *Terathea neglecta*. We also took a cross section of species that we thought may survive the shock of being wrenched from their surroundings. These were taken to the 'Tip Nursery'. This nursery is operated by Waste Services to re-vegetate the Lucas Heights Tip site with plants grown from locally collected seed. The MWFG helps propagate the plants and in return is allowed to use the facilities for its own projects. The plants were potted up and kept in the shade house until they recovered.

In late 2004 Alan Fairley came to have a look at what we were doing and while perusing the 'bypass refugees' spotted an hibbertia in flower and stated to our surprise that it was something interesting and may be a new species. Alan took a plant with him and sent a sample to taxonomist Hellmut Toelken who is reviewing the genus. Toelken agreed that it seemed to be a new one; further samples have been prepared and sent to him for a full review.



In the mean time we have been surveying the area around the bypass to see whether there are any left in the wild. So far we have found about 60 plants all along or near the east-west link corridor – in effect the south side of the Bangor-Menai ridge. But as a result of an article about it in Sutherlandshire's Bushcare Link Margaret Bradhurst reported another 90 plants in Maandowie Reserve on the other side of the Woronora River.

There may be other populations and so I would like to invite members in the area to keep an eye out for this species.

Description:

This species is part of the *H. stricta/riparia* group.

It is an upright to spreading shrub to 1 metre. The leaves are scattered, linear, usually 8-16mm by 1mm but sometimes longer on mature specimens. The margins are recurved right to the midrib. The stem has white stellate hairs. The flower is typical hibbertia - 5 yellow petals and usually 6, sometimes 8, stamens ALL to one side of 2 silky carpels. The sepals are mainly glabrous but with hairs on the margins.

Habitat

Specimens sighted so far grow on the sides of ridges and down into gullies in sandstone soils but not on the ridge tops. There is usually a watercourse or evidence of seepage nearby.

They are undershrubs under She-oakes and gums particularly *Allocasuarina littoralis* and *Angophora costata*. Associated species include *Micrantheum ericoides*, *Grevillea mucronulata*, *Platysace lanceolata*, *Actinotus minor*, *Goodenia* species and *Banksia spinulosa*.

The Menai Wildflower Group has joined Alan in approaching the relevant authorities to see what can be done about protecting the remnant population while we wait for a decision on the plants status. If this plant is given species status we of course would have no input into its naming but we refer to it, tongue in cheek, as *bangorbypassii*; Cas Liber has suggested that the latinised form *deverticuli* ['of the bypass' apparently] would be more acceptable. But to be fair *fairleyii* would be even better in recognition of Alan's role in the conservation of this and so many other species.

Could anyone who thinks they may have come across this species please contact Lloyd Hedges on 9543 1216.