

# Focus on Flora

Native Plants of the Adelaide Hills & Barossa



Kersbrook Landcare Group

# Identification Made Easy

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- Choose a matching life form.
- Find this coloured section in the book.
- Match the plant with a similar photograph.
- Read the notes to check identification.



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## Kersbrook Landcare Group

# Bulbine bulbosa

**Bulbine-lily**  
Asphodel Family ASPHODELACEAE  
LILIACEAE

*bul-BINE (bul-BEE-nee) bul-bohs-uh* Meaning: *Bulbine – bulb, bulbosa – bulbous*

**General description** A small perennial lily with smooth bright-green leaves and yellow flowers.

**Specific features** Plants regenerate annually from a tuber to form a tall stem from a base of fleshy bright-green channelled, cylindrical leaves. The flowers have 6 yellow petals with a prominent bright-green mid vein. The fruit is a capsule about 6 mm in diameter

**Size** To about 50 cm tall.

**Community** Native grasslands and open woodland.

**Flowering time** Spring.

**Special interest** Tubers eaten by Aboriginal people.

**Abundance** Common.

**Well represented at** Para Wirra CP but widespread.

**Similar species** *Bulbine semibarbata*  
Annual Bulbine-lily grows much more vigorously, with its smaller yellow flowers having half of their stamens 'bearded'.



# Tricoryne elatior

**Yellow Rush-lily**  
Day Lily Family HEMEROCALLIDACEAE  
LILIACEAE

*triek-uh-IEEN-ee ee-LAHT-ee-or* Meaning: *Tricoryne – three, club shaped, elatior – taller*

**General description** Often inconspicuous, this erect branched plant has fine, wiry stems and bears small clusters of yellow star-like flowers at the tips. Some longish leaves present at the base of the plant and up the stem.

**Specific features** Six petaled flowers are usually more than 1 cm across, with a green tinge on the outside. Flowers have 6 fine yellow tufts on the stamens. At flowering time the stems are almost leafless. Flowers form a striped twist at end of flowering.

**Size** 20-40 cm.

**Community** Heath and grassy woodland.

**Flowering time** Late spring and summer.

**Special interest** Occasionally scented. Sometimes found growing within and supported by another plant. Seed capsules are very small and oval shaped.

**Abundance** Common.

**Well represented at** Hale CP but widespread.

**Similar species** *Tricoryne tenella* Small Yellow Rush-lily with striated stems.

*Bulbine bulbosa* (p 6) has a distinct spike of flowers.



# Amyema miquelii

Box Mistletoe  
Mistletoe Family LORANTHACEAE

*a-mie-EEM-a meek-EL-ee-eye* Meaning: *miquelii* – after botanist Miquel

**General description** A semi-parasitic, drooping plant with red flowers, attached to branches of trees or shrubs.

**Specific features** Grows on host branches from a woody attachment which is often more visible on dead mistletoes. Leaves are similar to the host plant but more yellow-green in colour and arranged opposite each other. Flowers are stalked, orange to bright red and dangle in clusters of 3. The fruit is long and yellowish.

**Size** Droops in a clump to about 2 m.

**Community** Woodland and forest.

**Flowering time** All seasons of the year.

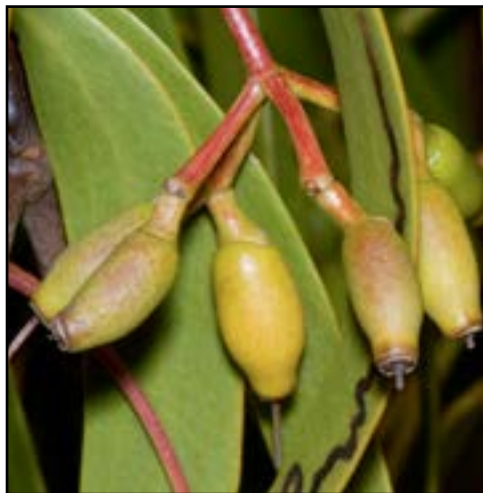
**Special interest** Found mostly on smooth-barked gums. Also grows on wattles and sheoaks.

Spread by mistletoe birds that feed on the fruit, then deposit their droppings with a glue-like substance to the branch.

**Abundance** Common.

**Well represented at** Widespread on roadsides.

**Similar species** *Amyema pendulum* Drooping Mistletoe mainly found on the rough bark of *Eucalyptus obliqua* but is unlikely to be seen in the region except at Kaiserstuhl CP and the central Hills.



# Lysiana exocarpi

Harlequin Mistletoe  
Mistletoe Family LORANTHACEAE

*lie-see-AHN-uh eks-oh-KARP-ee (eye)* Meaning: *Lysiana* – set apart from *Loranthus*, *exocarpi* – outside fruit

**General description** Spreading semi-parasitic plant with long, flat narrow leaves and upright red tubular flowers with green tips.

**Specific features** Attached to host plants often sheoaks, sometimes other mistletoes. Flowers sometimes yellow tipped with 6 narrow green petals. Oval fruit red or black when ripe.

**Size** Depends on age and host plant.

**Community** Various.

**Flowering time** All year.

**Special interest** Various host plants but not *Eucalyptus*. Important bird food with sticky fruit containing the seed, excreted and stuck to the branch where it may later grow. Grows on some non-native species eg fruit trees. Fruit eaten year round by Aboriginal people.

**Abundance** Common.

**Well represented at** Sandy Creek CP but widespread.

**Similar species** Other mistletoe species which have more open hanging flowers with no, or only a partial tube.



# Eutaxia microphylla

## Common Eutaxia

Peas FABACEAE: FABOIDEAE  
LEGUMINOSAE

yue-TAKS-ee-uh mie-kroh-FIL-uh Meaning: Eutaxia – well-ordered (leaves), microphylla – small leaves

**General description** Variable habit from prostrate forms to an erect shrub to 50 cm tall but in this area, a much-branched low bush with dark-yellow and red veined pea-flowers.

**Specific features** Small paired leaves are crowded and close to the stem, usually flattened but appear cylindrical. Leaves are smooth with a stiff spine on the end of each branch.

**Size** Often to about 50 cm.

**Community** Woodland.

**Flowering time** Spring.

**Special interest** Caterpillars of the Fringed Blue Butterfly feed on this species. As with all hard seeded legumes, the seed coat needs to be cracked before germination can take place.

**Abundance** Uncommon.

**Well represented at** Para Wirra CP. (N,C,S)

**Similar species** *Pultenaea* have a similar shaped pea-flower and colour but can be distinguished by the brown papery bracts (stipules) at the base of the leaf.



# Dillwynia hispida

## Red Parrot-pea

Peas FABACEAE: FABOIDEAE  
LEGUMINOSAE

dil-WIN-ee-uh HIS-pid-uh Meaning: Dillwynia – after L. Dillwyn, hispida – with bristly hairs

**General description** Small upright shrub with tiny leaves and orange-reddish pea-flowers on long fine stalks at the tips.

**Specific features** Usually with narrow hairy leaves. Clusters of 1-5 broad flowers grow on a thin stalk at the end of branches. Fruits are globular pods.

**Size** To 50 cm.

**Community** Heathy woodland and forest.

**Flowering time** Spring.

**Special interest** Easily grown from seed.

**Abundance** Common.

**Well represented at** Kersbrook Reserve but widespread.

**Similar species** *Dillwynia sericea* Showy Parrot-pea, is hairy with stalkless flowers and found south of Black Hill.



# Melicytus angustifolius

Formerly Hymenanthera dentata

## Tree Violet

Violet Family VIOLACEAE

*mel-ee-SIET-us an-gust-i-FOH-lee-us* Meaning: *Melicytus* – honey cave (flowers), *angustifolius* – narrow leaves

**General description** Variable from low sparse woody plant to more commonly a bushy shrub with many spiny-tipped branched stems. Leaves are small and dull-green.

**Specific features** Each stem has a pointed tip and leaves in small groups. Small yellow to cream cup-shaped flowers from the woody older stems. Roundish berries turn purple-black when ripe in February to March.

**Size** To 2 m.

**Community** Woodland, grassland.

**Flowering time** August to October.

**Special interest** Commonly growing beneath red gums from birds excreting its berry seeds. Important shrub for protection of small birds such as wrens. Often seen with lichen growing on it.

**Abundance** Uncommon.



**Well represented at** Mt Crawford area but widespread. (N,C)

**Similar species** Could be confused with Olives\* or Boxthorns\*, both of which have no spiny stem tips.



# Goodenia ovata

## Hop Goodenia

Goodenia Family GOODENIACEAE

*good-EEN-ee-uh oh-VAHT-uh* Meaning: *Goodenia* – after Bishop Goodenough, *ovata* – egg-shaped (leaf)

**General description** Soft-stemmed leafy shrub with many yellow flowers up the stem. Often grows massed in swamps and wet creeklines.

**Specific features** Stalked bright green leaves are roughly oval or triangular shaped with fine serrations along the edges. The shiny leaves are thin. Flowers stalked.

**Size** To 2 m often less.

**Community** Creeklines and gullies. Also woodlands and forests with higher rainfall.

**Flowering time** Mostly spring but throughout the year.

**Special interest** This is a quick growing species. Caterpillar plant food for the Meadow Argus butterfly.

**Abundance** Common.

**Well represented at** Kersbrook NFR but much more common and widespread in the central and southern Hills.

**Similar species** *Goodenia amplexans* Clasping Goodenia which has large long, sticky heart-shaped leaves which clasp around the stems, and a herby smell.



# Melaleuca uncinata

Broombush  
Myrtle Family MYRTACEAE

*mel-uh-LUEK-uh un-sin-AHT-uh* Meaning: *Melaleuca* – colors of black and white on branches, *uncinata* – hooked tip (leaf)

**General description** Dense spreading shrub with upright slender branches growing from a woody base. Small, pale-yellow bottlebrush flowers.

**Specific features** Fine needle-like leaves with a distinct hooked tip. Fruit fused together in clumps along the stem.

**Size** 2-3 m.

**Community** Sandy woodlands.

**Flowering time** Spring.

**Special interest** Can grow in dense thickets in some locations. Once used for brush fencing. Prefers sandy soils.

**Abundance** Scarce.

**Well represented in** Para Wirra area. (C)

**Similar species** Can appear similar to *Babingtonia behrii* (p 231) from a distance when not flowering but *Babingtonia* has tiny leaves, tea-tree flowers and does not retain its woody fruits.



# Melaleuca decussata

Totem-poles  
Myrtle Family MYRTACEAE

*mel-uh-LUEK-uh dee-kuss-AHT-uh* Meaning: *Melaleuca* – colours of black and white on branches, *decussata* – leaves opposite each other and at right angles to those above and below

**General description** Medium to large sized dense shrub with mauve-pink small bottlebrush-like flower heads.

**Specific features** Small blue-green leaves arranged in opposite pairs, each pair facing a different direction (decussate). The woody fruits are embedded in the stems, giving the name 'totem poles'.

**Size** Size 1-3 m.

**Community** Creeklines and damp places.

**Flowering time** Late spring and summer.

**Special interest** The density of this shrub provides very good bird nesting opportunities.

**Abundance** Common.

**Well represented** Mainly in the southern Hills area.

**Similar species** *Melaleuca lanceolata* (p 225) which does not have the decussate leaves and has white more open flower heads and a dark trunk.



# Allocasuarina verticillata

**Drooping Sheoak**  
Sheoak Family CASUARINACEAE

*al-oh-kas-yue-REEN-uh vert-iss-i-LAH-tuh* Meaning: *Allocasuarina* – other *Casuarina*- *verticillata* – whorl of leaves around stem

**General description** Tall dark-barked trees, the male with drooping branchlets tipped with yellow flowers (catkins) and the female with erect branches covered in small cones.

**Specific features** Leaves reduced to 9-12 small brown teeth at the junctions of branchlet segments. Female flowers are red fluffy tufts. Male flowers (catkins) occur at the tips. Fruits are cylindrical, cone-like, covered with small sharp points, with or without a short stalk.

**Size** To 10 m.

**Community** Open grassy woodlands.

**Flowering time** Spring.

**Special interest** Often in stands, or solitary in forests. Sheoak leaf litter is believed to be important for mycorrhiza fungi. Used to be known as *Casuarina stricta*.

**Abundance** Common.

**Well represented at** Para Wirra CP but widespread.

**Similar species** *Allocasuarina muelleriana* (p 206) is smaller and more compact. Also *Allocasuarina striata* Small Bull-oak. Both of these are shrubs.



Male flower



Female flower



# Banksia marginata

**Silver Banksia**  
Protea Family PROTEACEAE

*BANKS-ee-uh mah-jin-AH-tuh* Meaning: *Banksia* – after J. Banks, *marginata* – margined leaves

**General description** A tall shrub or tree with numerous heads of dense, very small golden flowers. Leaves mostly smooth-edged except when young.

**Specific features** Dark-green narrow leaves are smooth above with many fine white hairs below. Flowers golden, clustered in a large dense head that stands upright from the twig or branch. Seeds also clustered into a large cylindrical woody cone-like structure with each small point containing 2 seeds with papery wings. Seed is shed annually.

**Size** From 1-10 m tall.

**Community** Heath and open woodland, often in sandy soil.

**Flowering time** Typically autumn but throughout much of the year.



**Special interest**

Very attractive flowers provide nectar for birds, insects and possums. This species of *Banksia* is able to sucker after fires, as well as shedding seed into the ash bed. Larger trees can have thick trunks.



**Abundance** Common.

**Well represented at** Sandy Creek CP but widespread.

**Similar species** None in this area.





# Cladium procerum

## Leafy Twig-rush

Sedge Family CYPERACEAE

KLAD-ee-um PROSS-uh-ruhm Meaning: Cladium – branch, procerum - tall

**General description** A very tall robust sedge spreading in a large clump from a rhizome, with many jointed cylindrical stems and tough rough and very sharp edged leaves.

**Specific features** Stems hollow with distinct nodes and leaves to 2 m long but also bearing tufts of these long, hard, rough-edged grass-like leaves. The female flower spike is red-brown and finely branched. It has hundreds of small brownish flowers without petals that develop into tiny brown nutlets.

**Size** To about 2-3 m tall.

**Community** River edge in deep water or reservoir margins.

**Flowering time** Late spring through summer with the flower-head present for much of the year.

**Special interest** The tallest and most spectacular sedge in the region.

**Abundance** Scarce.

**Well represented** Along the South Para River at various places particularly at Glenburnie Water Reserve. (C)

**Similar species** None.



# Carex species

## Sedges

Sedge Family CYPERACEAE

KAHR-eks Meaning: Carex – the classical Latin name for sedges, ap-PRESS-uh, brev-ee-KULM-is, ter-EET-i-kawl-is

**General description** Dense tussock of long or short leaves and stems with small flowers along a flowering spike. Inhabiting moist places. Seed 2-4 mm long.

**Carex appressa** Tall Sedge

Tall sedge to 1 m, stems triangular in cross-section, solid pith in stems with rough margins.

Leaves long drooping yellow-green, about as long as stems.

Seed enclosed in dry 'bladder'. Found along stream margins, swamps and shallow permanent water.



**Carex breviculmis** Short-stem sedge

Short triangular stems 15-40 cm. Short flower spikes well below leaf height. Moist areas including damp grassland. Seeds enclosed in a hairy papery layer.



**Carex tereticaulis** Rush Sedge

To 1 m tall. Leaves frequently absent. Stems grey-green, smooth, hollow, cylindrical but with triangular section below flower head. Damp ground sometimes subject to inundation. Seed within a membranous layer.



**Flowering time** Mostly spring and summer.

**Abundance** All common.

# Triglochin procera

Formerly Triglochin procerum

## Water-ribbons

Arrowgrass Family JUNCAGINACEAE

*trie-GLOH-kuhn* *PROS-uh-uh* Meaning: *Triglochin* – three-pointed (projections on fruit), *procera* – tall (stamens)

**General description** Clusters of tubers produce robust aquatic perennials, with long green ribbon-like leaves floating on the surface of pools and rivers. Dense flower spikes grow on stout stems held well above the surface.

**Specific features** Erect dense flower-spikes of numerous small white or mauve flowers bearing fruits August to April, dying back to tubers when water dries out.

**Size** Stem 20-50 cm above water, leaves to 2 m.

**Community** Fresh water.

**Flowering time** Spring and summer.

**Special interest** Shape of tubers on the ends of roots, as well as leaves, stem and flower-spike determine the species.

**Abundance** Uncommon.

**Well represented at** Roachdale NT Reserve. (N,C,S)

**Similar species** *Triglochin alcockiae*, with different shaped tubers and narrower leaves with finer stems. Found at Millbrook Reservoir and Birdwood in this area.



# Grasses

Grasses in the region are typically deep rooted tussocks living more than 1 year. Size varies immensely with some seed spikes reaching 2 m in good years. Grasses are important food plants for many species of birds and provide habitat for reptiles and insects.

*Aristida behriana* (foreground) *Themeda triandra* (background)

