Plant of the Month - June

by Allan Carr

Acacia baueri subsp. *baueri*

Tiny Wattle

Pronunciation: a-KAY-sha   BOW-er-eye

MIMOSACEAE

Derivation: *Acacia*, from the Greek, *akakia* from *akazo* – to sharpen, referring to the prickly nature of the first species discovered; ***baueri***, after brothers, Ferdinand and Franz Bauer, Austrian botanical artists (Ferdinand was appointed botanical draughtsman with Matthew Flinders on his survey of the Australian coastline in 1801-03).

Whorls of leaves, flowers, buds

Leaves, flowers, buds

Acacia, the largest Australian plant genus has about 955 species throughout the continent. For information about the term 'wattle' see Plant of the Month, August 2013 or June 2014.

There are two subspecies of this plant. *A. baueri* subsp. *baueri* is found on infertile and often seasonally waterlogged sands in coastal heathland from south-east Qld to south of Sydney in NSW. *A. baueri* subsp. *aspera* which has distinctly warty branches is confined to the Blue Mountains and is listed as vulnerable in NSW.

Description: *A. baueri* subsp. *baueri* listed as vulnerable in Qld is a spindly, multi-stemmed shrub to 50 cm, but more likely 30 cm. Branchlets are *terete and hairy as in the left photo above or without hairs. Much habitat of this species has been lost to development on coastal lowlands in south-east Qld.

Phyllodes to 16 mm x 2 mm are usually in whorls of 6 to 8, straight or slightly curved, and sparsely hairy as in the left photo above or smooth. Each phyllode has one longitudinal nerve on each side and a slightly recurved tip.

Inflorescences of 10 to 15 flowers in *globose heads 8 mm across on *peduncles 2 to 16 mm long are produced in the phyllode axils usually from June to September. Each individual flower is bright yellow and 3 to 5 mm across.

Fruits are brown, thinly, leathery pods to 25 mm x 4 mm with longitudinal dark brown seeds to 5.5 mm x 2.5 mm and more or less *terete.

*terete = cylindrical, circular in cross-section

*globose = nearly spherical

*peduncle = the stalk of an inflorescence

Habit, flowers, fruits