

DO YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE? *Daviesia* Genus ... Bill McKellar

Drawings by Kaye Traynor

Photographs by Margaret MacDonald

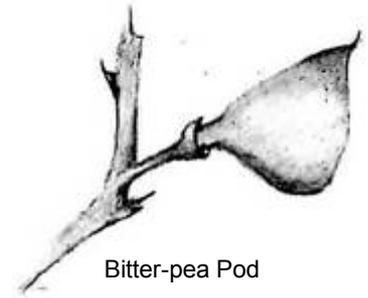
The *Daviesia* Genus is named after the Rev Hugh Davies, a Welsh 18th Century Botanist. It is a member of the Fabaceae family. They are commonly known as Bitter Peas.

There are about 200 species native to Australia, mainly from south-east Western Australia where there are 119 species. Four species have been found in Anglesea, of which 3 are uncommon.



Bitter-pea phyllodes

Daviesia are distinguished from the other pea flowering plants by their triangular seed pods. See *Kaye's drawing*.



Bitter-pea Pod

***Daviesia brevifolia* Leafless Bitter-pea: Common**

Daviesia brevifolia is a small leafless shrub up to 90 cm. The small phyllodes are thorn-like and continuous with the branches. See *drawing*. Usually, it is an understory plant found on sandy or gravel soils, and is inconspicuous until it flowers from August to October, when the profuse, dark-apricot pea flowers are beautiful and attention seeking. They then mature into a triangular seed-pod, 1.5 cm long and containing one seed.



Leafless Bitter-pea

Uncommon

Daviesia latifolia is a shrub of medium size, up to 2 m high. It has large phyllodes, ovate to lanceolate, from 5–12 cm long, and 2–3 cm wide. Yellow-brown, perfumed pea flowers, borne on racemes, appear from September to January. The single seed is held in a 1 cm triangular pod. The only specimens I've seen are in Menzels Reserve, Seifferts Road, Bellbrae. There they form an open thicket in dappled shade, and well-drained soil.

***Daviesia leptophylla*; Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea : Rare**

Daviesia leptophylla is a small shrub up to 90 cm. Its narrow phyllodes are slightly rolled with a point 1–3 cm long and 0.5 cm wide. In August to October, they produce yellow-brown pea flowers in clusters in leaf axils. The seed is contained in triangular pods about 1 cm long. I found a specimen about 10 m from the top of Messmate track. I hope there are others.



Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea

***Daviesia ulicifolia*; Gorse Bitter-pea ; Rare**

Daviesia ulicifolia is also a small shrub, about 1 m, and is found in open heathland. Its narrow phyllodes are 2–3 cm long and up to 1 cm wide. Both the branches and leaves are prickly. Orange to brown pea flowers appear in axils near the branch ends from July to October. The seed-pods again are triangular 1.5 cm long. Margaret MacDonald tells me there are some specimens between Moggs Creek and Fairhaven.



Hop Bitter-pea

References:

- <https://florabase.dpaw.wa.gov.au/browse/profile/21558>
- Enid Mayfield 2013, *Flora of the Otway Plain & Ranges 2* CSIRO PUBLISHING Melbourne

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