

FOUR COASTAL SHRUBS IN OUR AREA – DO YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE?

... *Eathorne Mitchell*

... *Drawings Ruth Hurst*

Four small shrubs that share similar habitats along the coast and throughout the heathland, growing close to cliff edges, and in the poor soils typical of this area, are this month's highlights. One, Coast Pomaderris, is of the family Rhamnaceae, and two are of the family Steruliaceae, and the fourth, Common Correa, is in the Rutaceae family.

Coast Pomaderris *Pomaderris paniculosa* subsp. *paralia*



Coast Pomaderris

is a compact shrub growing up to 2 metre, with variable, small, oval leaves, the undersides of which have a rusty appearance, because of a covering of fine hairs. Branchlets, too, have this rusty look, and new growth is most attractive. The upper surfaces of the leaves are smooth, dark-green and have deeply recessed veins. Insignificant, creamy flowers appear in late spring and summer.

Paper Flower *Thomasia petalocalyx*

is covered in mauvish-pink, papery looking flowers, nodding flowers with showy pink sepals, and very tiny red petals, from late spring to autumn. The dark-green leaves, which can be up to 4 cm long, have veins impressed deeply into the upper leaf surface. It can grow to 1 metre high.



Paper Flower

Slender Velvet-bush *Lasiopetalum baueri*



Slender Velvet-bush

grows along the coast in extensive thickets to 1 metre high. The narrow, long, grey-green leaves, like those of the pomaderris, have rusty hairs on the undersurface. In dry conditions, drooping, half-dead looking leaves revive quickly with water. It also comes up in large patches after a fire, and is useful as a plant for garden or regeneration areas. Flowers have pale pink sepals and minute (less than 1 mm), red petals.

Common Correa *Correa reflexa*

is an erect or spreading shrub distributed widely throughout this district. The variable leaves, narrow

and dark green, with a few hairs on the upper surface, and light brown with dense woolly hairs underneath, can be mistaken for those of the Coastal Pomaderris. But the tubular, red and green, or all green, flowers, are very different, being much more showy, and having a longer flowering time from autumn until spring. The flowers also vary in shape size and colour, but are always relatively narrow. We mainly see the red and green tipped form.



Common Correa

Reference: MacDonald, Margaret (ed) 2009, *Flowers of Anglesea and Aireys Inlet*, ANGAIR Inc., Anglesea

Copyright

Any article or information appearing in this *Newsletter* may be copied to further interest in the conservation of native flora and fauna or in environmental care, provided that the source and contributor(s) are acknowledged.