

The Plant Family *Goodeniaceae* –DO YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE?

... *Chris Morrissey*

Goodeniaceae are herbs or shrubs, represented in our area by the four *Goodenias*, the Fan-flower, the Swamp-mat, and the Blue Pincushion, which is now included in this family.

Their main characteristics are bi-sexual, irregular-shaped (zygomorphic) flowers with five-winged petals, and a cup-shaped tip of the style, known as an indusium. This encloses the stigma, and collects pollen before the style grows up, and before the flower opens.

Our four *Goodenias* are *Goodenia geniculata* Bent Goodenia, *G. lanata* Trailing Goodenia, *G. ovata*, Hop Goodenia, and the less common *G. humilis*, Swamp Goodenia. The flowers of each species are similar – yellow and five-petalled (2 in an upper lip and 3 in a lower lip). The leaves are often hairy with toothed margins. The Bent Goodenia, a low-growing perennial herb, is perhaps the most common of the four species in our district, and is found in heathland and woodland,



Bent Goodenia

flowering in late spring and summer.

Scaevola albida Small-fruit Fan-flower is a perennial, prostrate grower, which can form large mats on coastal cliffs or heathland. The leaves are oval and may be toothed or smooth-edged. The blue or white flowers grow in the leaf axils, and are fan-shaped – the five petals grow from one side only. They appear in spring and summer.



Small-fruit Fan-flower

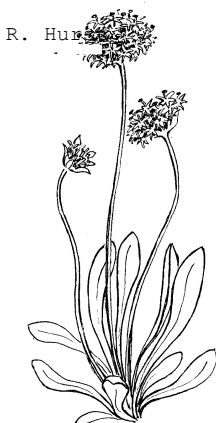
Selliera radicans Shiny Swamp-mat, also a perennial, prostrate plant, has glossy succulent leaves and grows in wetlands. Its stems grow along the ground, rooting at the nodes, forming a mat. The fan-shaped, five-petalled flowers are white above and mauve-red underneath, with yellow centres.

They appear in the leaf axils, either singly or on short racemes, in early summer.

Brunonia australis – Blue Pincushion, has a hairy rosette of spoon-shaped leaves, and a dome-shaped head of tiny, blue, five-petalled flowers – the “pincushion”. The pale stigma stands above each flower – the “pin”. It is a perennial plant that grows in heathland and woodland, and flowers in late spring.



Shiny Swamp-mat



Blue Pincushion

References:

Mayfield, Enid, 2013 *Flora of the Otway Plain & Ranges 2* CSIRO PUBLISHING;
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