

## Do you know these 'Petite and Purple' species?

*Text: Ros Gibson. Photos: Margaret MacDonald*

In the Anglesea-Aireys Inlet area, wildflower lovers generally think of November as the 'blue month' (see ANGAIR Newsletter #10, 2020). Some blue and purple flowered species are found right throughout the summer months too. Several are dainty and diminutive, and you will need to look carefully to see them.



Swamp Mazus

**Swamp Mazus, *Mazus pumilio*.** The glossy leaves of this perennial herb are spoon-shaped with wavy margins and form a dense, ground-hugging carpet in damp areas. The two-lipped mauve flowers have two white mounds flecked with yellow on the broader lower lip and are borne on slender branched stalks above the leafy mat. The plant spreads by suckering and its long flowering period extends from spring to autumn.

**Creeping Monkey Flower, *Thyridia repens* (formerly *Mimulus repens*).** Occurring in swampy places including the margins of saltmarshes, it has tiny, paired stalkless oval leaves and spreads by producing roots where the stems contact the soil. The blue to violet flowers are tubular and lobed and have a yellow centre on the lower lobe. They appear from late spring to early autumn.



Creeping Monkey Flower



Slender Speedwell

**Slender Speedwell, *Veronica gracilis*.** A slender, usually trailing plant that spreads via rhizomatous roots and is widespread in a range of situations. It forms a soft ground cover of narrow leaves that taper to a fine tip. The cup-shaped flowers that have four mauve or pale blue petals with darker veins can be seen in spring and summer.

**Austral Bugle, *Ajuga australis*.** A low-growing perennial herb found in well-drained open areas. It has a basal rosette of velvety-green toothed leaves from which erect spikes of purple to blue tubular flowers emerge from late spring to late summer.



Austral Bugle



Small-fruit Fan-flower

**Small-fruit Fan-flower, *Scaevola albida*.** Found in a variety of habitats, this perennial, prostrate and spreading herb has white to pale-blue flowers with five petals that spread in a fan-shape. Some flowers can be seen most of the year but are more abundant in spring and summer. The elongated oval leaves vary in size and may have either toothed or smooth margins.

**Angled Lobelia, *Lobelia anceps*.** A low-growing, spreading, perennial herb growing in damp places. Small, single five-petalled flowers appear in summer and autumn and are light blue to violet with a white throat. The lower three petals are arranged in a fan shape. The angular stems bear soft, narrow, well-spaced leaves with either toothed or smooth margins. Roots emerge from nodes.



Angled Lobelia