

**RHAMNACEAE – The Family With Some Hidden, Hooded Males ... Ellinor Campbell, with drawings by Ruth Hurst and Kaylene Traynor**

This is a large, world wide family, with common characteristics of woodiness, hairiness, small regular flowers, petals being small or absent, and rough leaves. In our district there are just three genus representatives: *Cryptandra*, *Spyridium* and *Pomaderris*.

From a distance, *Cryptandra* and the two *Spyridium* species look totally different, but a close examination shows flowers that are almost identical, both with hidden, hooded males. To explain: the tiny, white flowers have five sepals, which are on the outside, and masquerade as petals. The petals are in the centre of the flowers, in the form of minute, white hoods, which turn brown with age, and which fold over, and hide the five anthers. This is clearly visible with a magnifier, and well worth a look.

***Cryptandra tomentosa* Prickly Cryptandra** has the perfect name from the Greek *kryptos* = hidden, and *Andros* = man, referring to the anthers in the hood-shaped petals, and *tomentosus* = with a layer of matted woolly down. The white, hairy, nectary disc surrounding the ovary at the base of the stigma and style, looks quite magical when magnified. The flowers become pink as they age.

There are stellate or starry hairs on branchlets, stems and flowers. The rough, glabrous (without hairs) leaves are revolute or curled under.



Propeller Plant

***Spyridium vexilliferum* Propeller Plant**

*Vexilliferus* = flag-bearing. The distinctive, whitish, floral leaves on both *Spyridium*s are actually bracts, and, in this species, they are in twos or threes, giving the propeller look. The linear leaves are glabrous above and densely hairy underneath.

***Spyridium parvifolium* Dusty Miller.**

The undersides of the sepals are very hairy and dominate when viewed closely. The rounded leaves are hairy on both sides, and have pronounced veins.



Coast Pomaderris

In the ***Pomaderris*** genus we have five species. Characteristics of *Pomaderris* include stellate or simple hairs, and alternate leaves, which are green above and white or rusty below. They have clusters of small flowers, which may have five sepals that alternate with the stamens, but do not enclose the anthers, or have no petals at all.

***Pomaderris paniculosa* subsp. *paralia* Coast Pomaderris**

*Paniculosa* = flowers in a little panicle (which is a much-branched flower cluster), and *paralius* = growing by the sea. The narrow, open clusters of cream or greenish flowers have no petals. The roundish leaves are rich green and glabrous above, and pale and rusty coloured, and densely stellate-hairy below.

***Pomaderris ferrugiana* Rusty Pomaderris**

*Ferrugineus* = rusty brown. This tall shrub has branchlets covered in rusty-coloured hairs. The dense, clustered flowers are quite a feature and these **do** have petals. The ovate leaves are also glabrous, and rich green above, while being pale and hairy below.

***Pomaderris aspera* Hazel Pomaderris** grows as a small tree in wet forest, so is more common in the Lorne area. ***P. elachophyla* Lacy**, and ***P. racemosa* Cluster** are uncommon in our district.



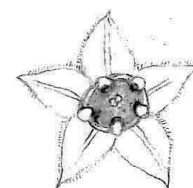
Dusty Miller



Rusty Pomaderris



Prickly Cryptandra



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