photo: J. Tann - www.flickr.com

Glycine clandestina

(a) photo: M. Fagg

Glycine clandestina **is a fine open twining herb with long stems, often not noticed until it flowers. Common names include Twining Glycine [7] and Love Creeper [9].**

It is very variable in leaf size and shape, hairiness and flower size and colour [11], and can be mistaken for close relatives *Glycine canescens* (centre leaflet longer than two side ones, greyish hairs) or *Glycine tabacina* (broader, rounder leaflets) [2]. The genus *Glycine* includes the Soybean.

Population map:

www.ala.org.au/explore/species-maps/

Natural Populations

Glycine clandestina is found in NSW, Qld, Vic., Tas. and SA [8]. It is widespread from coast to subalpine and inland situations. It is common in moist conditions on shaded hillsides and coastal forests, in grasslands, heath, woodlands and forests [9], also mulga, bimble box, white cypress pine and several other woodland communities on sandy red earths in NSW [4].

Flowering and Seeds

G. clandestina flowers all year round, although more commonly in spring [8, 9]. The small pea flowers vary from pale pink through mauve to pale blue and grow in the upper leaf axils in small loose clusters [9].

The fruits are 3-4 cm long pods, usually hairy [3], each containing 4-8 dark brownish red seeds [2]. The pods turn almost black and seeds are red-brown at maturity [3].

Collect seed pods as they turn black from October to February, just prior to splitting [2]. Monitor closely as seeds release very soon after maturity [5]. Bag the maturing fruits or place groundsheets under plants to catch seeds (although ants also

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harvest the seeds). Alternatively, the pods can be harvested close to maturity (when they turn brown) and fully dried in a warm area [3].

Properly cleaned, seeds can be successfully stored for a long time [1, 3, 10].

To source seeds or plants:
www.grassywoodlands.org.au

Cultivation and Uses

The seeds have hard coats like wattles and other legumes, and will benefit from hot-water treatment. Put the seeds in a jar and cover with just-boiling water. Leave to cool, then examine the seeds. Some will have swelled to double their size, others will be unchanged. Sow the swollen ones in ordinary potting mix. Germination will be in 3-4 weeks [2, 5, 6]. Suitable for direct seeding in pots (2-3 seeds per pot) [5].

G. clandestina can also be propagated by cutting. Stem cuttings taken in summer should strike [2]. *G. clandestina* regenerates from seed and suckers, particularly after fire [5].

In horticulture *G. clandestina* adds some interest as it climbs through other plants [7]. It can tolerate wind, slightly salt-laden wind, light frost [12], and medium drought [13]. It needs partial to full shade [10].

No watering is required once *G. clandestina* is established if it is planted in suitable conditions, although it may require water over long dry periods [13].

Being legumes, all *Glycine* sp. have important relationships with *Rhizobium* bacteria, which live in root-nodules and allow the plant to fix nitrogen from the air [1, 2, 6].

The flowers are a source of nectar and pollen for native insects, including bees and wasps [5], and the leaves are food for caterpillar species [11].

G. clandestina has a woody rootstock but the stems are slender and delicate and susceptible to grazing [2]. It is heavily grazed by stock as nutritious and palatable [5].

References

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[1] Carr, D. (1997). *Plants in Your Pants: a pocket guide for the identification and use of the common plants of the northwest slopes.* Greening Australia NSW, Armidale.

[2] Walker, K., Burrows, G., and McMahon, L. (2001). *Bidgee Bush, An identification guide to common native plants species of the South Western Slopes of New South Wales.* Greening Australia, South West Slopes.

[3] Ralph, M. (1993). *Seed Collection of Australian Native Plants For Revegetation, Tree Planting and Direct Seeding.* 2nd ed. Fitzroy, Victoria: Bushland Horticulture.

[4] Cunningham, G.M., Mulham, W.E., Milthorpe, P.L. and Leigh, J.H. (1981). *Plants of Western New South Wales.* D. West: NSW Government Printing Office.

[5] Stelling, F. (ed.) (1998). *South West Slopes Revegetation Guide.* Murray Catchment Management Committee, Albury, NSW.

Internet links

[6] Grassy Box Woodland CMN website: **http://users.tpg.com.au/tmcleish/plants/plants_nativesoybeans.html**

[7] Australian National Botanic Gardens & Australian National Herbarium, Harden Species List: **http://www.anbg.gov.au/greening-grainbelt/harden-species-list.xls**

[8] PlantNET National Herbarium of New South Wales: **http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfl&lvl=sp&name=Glycine~clandestina**

[9] Friends of Lane Cove National Park Inc.: **http://www.friendsoflanecovenationalpark.org.au/Flowering/Flowers/Glycine_clandestina.htm**

[10] Dave's Garden website: **http://davesgarden.com/guides/pf/go/57170/**

[11] Yarra Ranges Local Plant Directory: **http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Residents/Yarra_Ranges_Plant_Directory/Middle_Storey/Climbers_and_creepers/Glycine_clandestina**

[12] Plant This website: **http://plantthis.com.au/plant-information.asp?gardener=15236&tabview=features&plantSpot=0**

[13] Bushland Flora, Australian Native Wholesale Plant Nursery: **http://www.bushlandflora.com.au/individual_plant.php?p=Glycine%20clandestina&uid=1389**

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